

COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING STRATEGY

2014 - 16



1. INTRODUCTION

This Communications and Marketing Strategy, which sets out our priorities and ambition for the next two years, is primarily designed to maximise residents' satisfaction with the Council. This is by keeping people informed, providing consistent messaging to reinforce the value for money the Council offers and by demonstrating how people can help influence decision-making.

The Communications and Marketing team provides expert advice on and delivers: media relations, digital development, internal communications, consultations and campaigns. All of this activity is designed to focus on **the outcome of the communication - whether this is to enhance the reputation of the Council, generate income or achieve cost avoidance.**

Examples of this evidence based approach are highlighted in the appendices of the strategy with a focus on outcomes delivering significant benefits in all of these areas. The infographics and case studies in the appendices illustrate the strategic approach taken by the Communications and Marketing group to deliver effective, value for money communications that deliver positive outcomes against its objectives.

These positive outcomes are only achievable through collaborative and joined up working with services across the Council, who manage service delivery, have a strong relationship with their customers and are relied upon to gather the information required for evaluation.

Our approach called **Strategic Communications**, means that the piece of communication is not an end in itself – it is the outcome that it delivers which is important. This is done in a way that aligns with the Council's corporate goals and the values contained in its Strategic Plan.

Professional, effective and focused communications that deliver real outcomes must be the standard at all times to maintain a quality service with increasing demands and reducing resources.

“ Strategic Communications, means that the piece of communication is not an end in itself ...

2. WHAT STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS WILL DELIVER

The overall aim of this strategy is to: **“Develop consistently excellent, innovative and effective communications and marketing, to improve satisfaction with services, the quality of life of people in Nottinghamshire and the reputation of the Council.”**

Value for money

Delivering value for money is a priority for us – over the past four years spending on communications has been cut by more than half whilst the effectiveness of the delivery has continued to improve. This has been achieved by taking an evidence based and customer focused approach. Overall satisfaction with the way the Council runs things increased from 40% to **63%** satisfaction in just two years, despite reducing the numbers delivering communication by 65% and cutting the marketing budget by 75%.

Delivering value for money from communications remains an ongoing commitment. Strong campaigns - that are focused on good planning, setting clear objectives with evaluation in place - is at the heart of our strategy. The generation of income and cost avoidance that totals more nearly **£5m** per year is a top priority.

Income generation

Campaigns and effective marketing will deliver approximately **£700,000** of income across the authority in the coming year. This is based on the success in 2013/14 where over £500,000 of additional income was generated from increased service

take-up, combined with projections for advertising and sponsorship and promoting new business opportunities.

Cost avoidance

Communications has the potential to have the biggest financial impact on cost avoidance, by decreasing the cost of delivering services. It is estimated that communications activity will deliver **nearly £4m** of financial benefits that includes over £3m through campaigns to increase the numbers of those coming forward to foster or adopt, which avoids the need to use more expensive external placements.

Savings

Alongside this communications will be supporting the delivery of more than **£23m** worth of savings proposals. In addition, Communications and Marketing will make savings in its own budget, which includes reducing staffing costs.

Digital solutions

One of the single biggest changes in the field of communications has been the way that the digital revolution is changing the way that our customers want to receive information, ask questions or receive our services.

Designing digital services that are so good that those who can, will choose to use them is one of the key themes of this strategy. This will be delivered by the Customer Access and Digital Development programme that sits in the Cross-Council portfolio in Redefining Your Council (the Council's framework for transformation).

One of the key drivers of this project is to lower the transaction costs at the authority in order to unlock savings. This programme will benchmark the savings possible. For example, the average cost of online transactions is significantly cheaper than other channels (£9.14 for face-to-face; £4.79 for telephone; and £0.09p for online).

In addition a digital solution has been identified as key to **£10m** of savings proposals to date. This figure is likely to grow as the Council moves customers on to more cost effective channels.

So, what does all this mean for the Communications and Marketing team?

- We are increasing efforts to continually develop the skills of everyone working in communications, so that digital becomes a core skill for all communications professionals.
- An essential component of this strategy is the ability to attract and retain highly skilled and qualified employees, as Communications continues to exist in a transformative and fast-paced environment where good communications remain a key ingredient of any successful change.

“ good communications remain a key ingredient of any successful change

- We will need to continue to seek ways to offer even better value for money through a transformative agenda that looks to adopting more effective and efficient communication solutions.
- Our ambition is to place the digital agenda at the heart of transformation at the Council and deliver savings through the design of services that are more efficient and lead to increased customer satisfaction.

supporting the delivery of more than

£23m

worth of savings proposals



3. SITUATION

All strategies operate within a wider environment and such factors are even more important during a period of fast and fundamental change.

Budget pressures

In recent years, the Council has faced unprecedented budget pressures due to reduced Government funding, increased demand in social care, and the impact of legislative pressures.

'Redefining Your Council'

The response to the strategic framework sets out the Council's new approach to transformation that will result in some services being delivered in a completely new way.

Clearly the shape of the Council is likely to change considerably over the coming few years. This strategy reflects this by adopting an approach that is agile, flexible and scaleable.

Digital revolution

The single biggest change to the way people live their lives is the digital revolution. While this offers specific challenges for large organisations such as the Council, it also offers enormous potential to change the way we deliver services to reflect this fundamental shift to online information, communication, engagement, transactions and services.

Communications and Marketing is leading the way in designing digital services that meet customer needs.

“ the single biggest change to the way people live their lives has been the digital revolution

4 . AUDIENCES

The demographics of our County are changing and the way that people live their lives – their habits, media consumption, needs and behaviours – is also changing at a dramatic pace. The Council needs to respond to this by adopting tactics that tap into this transformation.

Changing needs

People are increasingly living a longer life. In Nottinghamshire, it is expected the number of over 85 year olds will double by 2030. Longer life brings with it more complex and costly care needs.

The way people live and work is also changing due to the use of new technology. People want to interact with the Council in different ways, with growing demand for new online services and transactions. People are using multiple platforms, including a growth in mobile devices (e.g. smartphones and tablets) to access the internet, conduct research and make purchases (*Source: Google's Zero Moment of Truth*). 83% of all UK adults now use the internet, with the over 65s being the fastest growing group reaching 42% (*Source: Ofcom's Adults' Media Use and Attitudes Report 2014*).

The increase in use of social media and online networks has continued to grow while traditional channels like newspapers and printed materials have declined. A recent survey revealed that 73% of online adults use a social networking site and 42% use multiple social sites (*Source: Smith and Dugan, 2013*). People increasingly place more trust in recommendations from other people who have posted reviews and comments in online forums and blogs.

Segmenting the audience

The Council has moved from a mass communication model, which was costly and inefficient, to one that is more targeted on the audience based on the information available. This trend will continue as the service strives to deliver even better value for money.

The Council needs to further segment and target particular groups of people in order to achieve greater personalisations of communications and best value for money.

“ people increasingly place more trust in recommendations from other people

Customer insight

Improved customer insight will be increasingly critical as communications move beyond the traditionally demographic groupings to a greater knowledge and understanding of the behaviours, motivations and preferences of individuals. This information will be gathered by an improved Customer Relationship Management system that is planned along with research analysis by customer insight teams.

One of the key developments will be understanding why, when and how customers make contact or access services. Mapping these customer journeys will be critical to designing service delivery that is both usable and well used.

Communications will play a leading role in championing the use of customer insight to directly inform service development and targeted communications. This will include:

- maximising online channels to undertake effective consultation and engagement
- ensuring customers are informed and involved in any service changes that affect them
- working as One Council to better understand and analyse customer data

- working collaboratively to map and improve key customer journeys
- understanding the most effective communications channels/ touchpoints

Personas

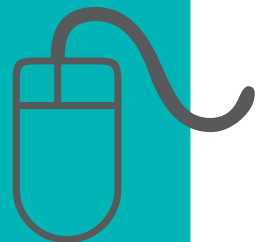
Using this insight, the Council will develop key personas that represent the typical types of customers and their level of engagement with the Council/ services/local democracy. In addition, the most common customer journeys will be fully mapped and understood. These will be used to inform communication strategy and tactics.

Employees

A new internal communications and engagement strategy will be needed to reflect the changing needs of the Council's workforce (whether directly employed or not).

83%

of all UK residents
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the internet



5. OBJECTIVES

This strategy directly supports the vision and values contained in the Council's Strategic Plan. The objectives of this strategy therefore relate to outcomes that are valuable to the organisation, such as increasing satisfaction or safeguarding reputation, generating income or savings through cost avoidance.

As a strategic support service, we believe that Communications and Marketing needs to demonstrate excellent value for money at all times. It is a given that the benefits of the service need to outweigh the cost of providing it and this must be demonstrated in everything that we do.

Satisfaction

This strategy, with its evidence-based strategic communications approach, will deliver the following primary objective: **Maximise the satisfaction levels of residents with the Council.** Whilst there are many factors that contribute to overall satisfaction, Communications and Marketing plays a key role in influencing the three main drivers of this objective. These are:

- How informed people feel
- Value for money perceptions
- How able people feel they can influence decision making

Value for money

As well as this, the other two key outcomes of communication and marketing is: **Improve the financial position of the Council by generating income and supporting major savings through cost avoidance.** It is important that resources are directed at where they can make the biggest impact in both of these areas. Sometimes the cost of generating income can either exceed or wipe out much of the revenue.

Savings

One of the key aims to save money is to move customers on to more cost effective digital channels, to find information, engage or transact with the Council.

See section eight, for the evaluation criteria which will be used to measure the success of this strategy.

“ Communications and Marketing needs to demonstrate excellent value for money

6. REDEFINING OUR COMMUNICATIONS

Communications operates in a fast-moving environment with new channels emerging rapidly. The following principles have been established to ensure that communications can be agile, keep up with the pace of change and identify all opportunities at the earliest stage.

Principles

This document has already outlined the Strategic Communication approach that is adopted, which relies on a number of principles. The over-arching principle is that communications is not an end in itself – it has to deliver something that is important to the Council as a whole. Communications and Marketing will design and deliver activity only when it positively affects one of the following:

- a. **Customer satisfaction** - by protecting reputation or targeting one of the three main drivers of this measure
- b. **Income generation** - by maximising income potential (taking into account cost of delivery)
- c. **Cost avoidance** – this is where communications can make the biggest difference and prioritising the areas where it can maximise savings.

All communications will be underpinned by the values contained in the Strategic Plan so that there is a consistent and repeated dialogue that reinforces the framework that is used to make decisions. This also starts developing a more mature brand or personality of the authority, so that there is a common understanding of what the Council stands for.

In addition to the headline principles above, the following **ten key principles** will be applied to plan, design, deliver and evaluate all communications.

- Evidence based
- Customer-focused
- Engaging
- Innovative and creative
- Integrated
- Flexible and agile
- Forward looking
- Value for money and efficient
- Fair i.e. open, honest and accessible
- Working in partnership.

“all communications will be underpinned by the values contained in the Strategic Plan

7. DELIVERY

Resources will be prioritised based on the following criteria, which has been agreed by Policy Committee and the Council's Corporate Leadership Team, with a greater weighting on the two criteria shown in bold:

- Strength of alignment with Strategic Plan objectives
- Strength of alignment with national policy, statutory need and performance targets
- **Strength of potential to save money, improve efficiency or generate income**
- **Potential to protect or enhance the Council's reputation**
- The contribution communications can make to achieve the desired outcome.

Underneath this strategy will sit a delivery plan that will detail how Communications and Marketing will ensure the objectives are delivered. Some of the key delivery elements of the strategy will include:

Digital First – we need to design online services so good that those who can will choose to use them, while not leaving anyone behind. This project has six work streams that will deliver a modern, multi-device friendly website along with customer journey improvements by May 2016. Importantly it will enable the delivery of savings while also increasing customer satisfaction. The following improvements will take place:

- Recommend a strategic approach to the use of social media platforms by September 2014
- Deliver improvements and savings to five pilot customer journeys by May 2015
- Launch a new public-facing website by September 2015
- Replace the schools extranet (called Wired) by October 2015
- Review employee engagement tools and launch new intranet/alternative by April 2016
- Review extranets and microsites in order to consolidate and make savings by May 2016.

Brand – our brand strategy will continue to reinforce the value for money message. This will become increasingly challenging as more services are delivered through different models, so contract negotiation on brand visibility will be critical. In addition, the Council's brand online will need to be further developed.

Engagement – the Council needs to maximise the use of social media to make sure that as many people as possible are engaged in local democracy and can see how their opinions can influence decision making.

Media – the power of the media (including online news websites) continues in its influence and authority, but social media

is playing an increasing role in determining reputation. This shift will need to be reflected in the way that resources are deployed over the coming years.

Consultation – providing professional advice for the organisation will continue to play an important role as more services undergo transformation. New and innovative solutions will need to be developed that reach some sections of the community that have not been involved with local democracy.

Employee engagement – delivery will increasingly move to a more two-way approach. Some solutions have already been developed such as Eureka! – which uses crowd-sourcing and game play to deliver more creative approaches to engagement. This direction of travel is likely to increase with digital playing an increasing role as the nature of the work force changes over the coming years.

Campaigns – targeted marketing campaigns will continue to be delivered to directly support business objectives, which may include awareness raising, service take-up, behaviour change or achieving income targets or savings through cost avoidance.

Email marketing – this represents a new ‘pull’ marketing channel where people sign up for news alerts from the Council on a range of subject matters. Since the launch in October 2013, more than 24,750 people have signed up for ‘emailme’ alerts.

Due to high customer satisfaction, this cost-effective and efficient model will be grown further. Consideration will also be given to how email marketing can play a role in every stage of the customer journey.

“ getting the right mix of communications channels is key

Getting the right mix of communications channels (whether online and offline or a combination of both) is key. Taking digital channels as an example, research suggests that for government services social media, email and paid search often act as ‘assisting’ channels, whereas organic search, referral and direct channels have greater impact as ‘last interaction’ channels (Source: Think with Google, 2014). This is where the expertise of the Communications and Marketing team can really help to enable the most targeted and therefore the most efficient communications, which represent best value for money.

8. EVALUATION

The Strategic Communications approach set out in section 2 includes evidence based, clear objectives and robust evaluation.

The headline outcomes of this strategy will be evaluated against the objectives set out in section 5. Success will be determined by the following measures:

- **2% increase in satisfaction with the way the Council runs things** – target of 60% set for 2014-15 (from a baseline of 58% in 2013-14). It should be noted that there are many factors which influence satisfaction. But the following three measures relate to the key drivers of satisfaction which Communications and Marketing have a key influence on.
- **8% increase in the number of people who feel informed** – target of 59% set for 2014-15 (from a baseline of 51% in 2013-14).
- **3% increase in the number of people who feel the Council provides value for money** – target of 46% set for 2014-15 (from a baseline of 43% in 2013-14). Brand awareness supports this measure with resident recognition of the brand rising from 33% in 2012 to 50% in 2013.
- **5% increase in the number of people who feel they can influence decisions in their local area (locality)** – target of 33% set for 2014-15 (from a baseline of 28% in 2013-14).
- **Income generation** – generate £48K in 2015/16 and £72K in 2016/17 through advertising and sponsorship. Supporting services across the Council with specialist marketing advice and activity to generate an additional income of £700K. This includes increased up-take of services such as School Meals, County Enterprise Foods, and increased sales and secondary spends at the Country Parks and Libraries.
- **Cost avoidance** – collaborative working with services to support the delivery of cost avoidance that totals £4m. £1m in transport and highways costs from road safety awareness and promotion of alternative transport networks. Further costs can be avoided in promoting services to keep residents living independently in their own home.
- **Digital customer journeys** – reduce the number of visits to the Council website which are unsuccessful from 22% to 14% and reduce transaction costs.

These outcomes will be measured by the Nottinghamshire Annual Residents' Satisfaction Survey, Digital First project reporting, income generation figures, through the implementation of service business cases and the evaluation of specific campaigns.

9 . SUMMARY

Over the coming years, Communications and Marketing will play a crucial role in helping the Council to listen, inform, engage, involve and consult the public about services and how they will change.

Demand for communication services will inevitably increase due to changing services and customer needs. This will be met through increased efficiency and better value for money rather than increased resources.

Communications and Marketing will also play its part in the financial challenge. In 2015-16 it will deliver nearly **£5m** worth of income generation and cost avoidance for the authority and support **£23m** of service budget savings (outlined in service business cases which have been approved to date).

Communications is playing a lead role in the Council's Digital First agenda and will develop a new and improved web platform and other digital functionality. This will increase the number of transactions carried out online while decreasing the average cost of each transaction. In addition, a digital solution has been identified as needed to unlock savings of nearly **£10m**.

Innovation

There is one other key area that the service aims to lead, inspire, support and deliver – that area is innovation and transformation. Communications and Marketing has already delivered some innovative solutions including a crowd-sourcing ideas platform, Eureka! and an interactive infographic to help simplify and explain the Council's budget.

To further inspire creativity, Communications and Marketing will lead the way by establishing a new innovative work space that enables the service to think, plan and deliver in a more creative way.

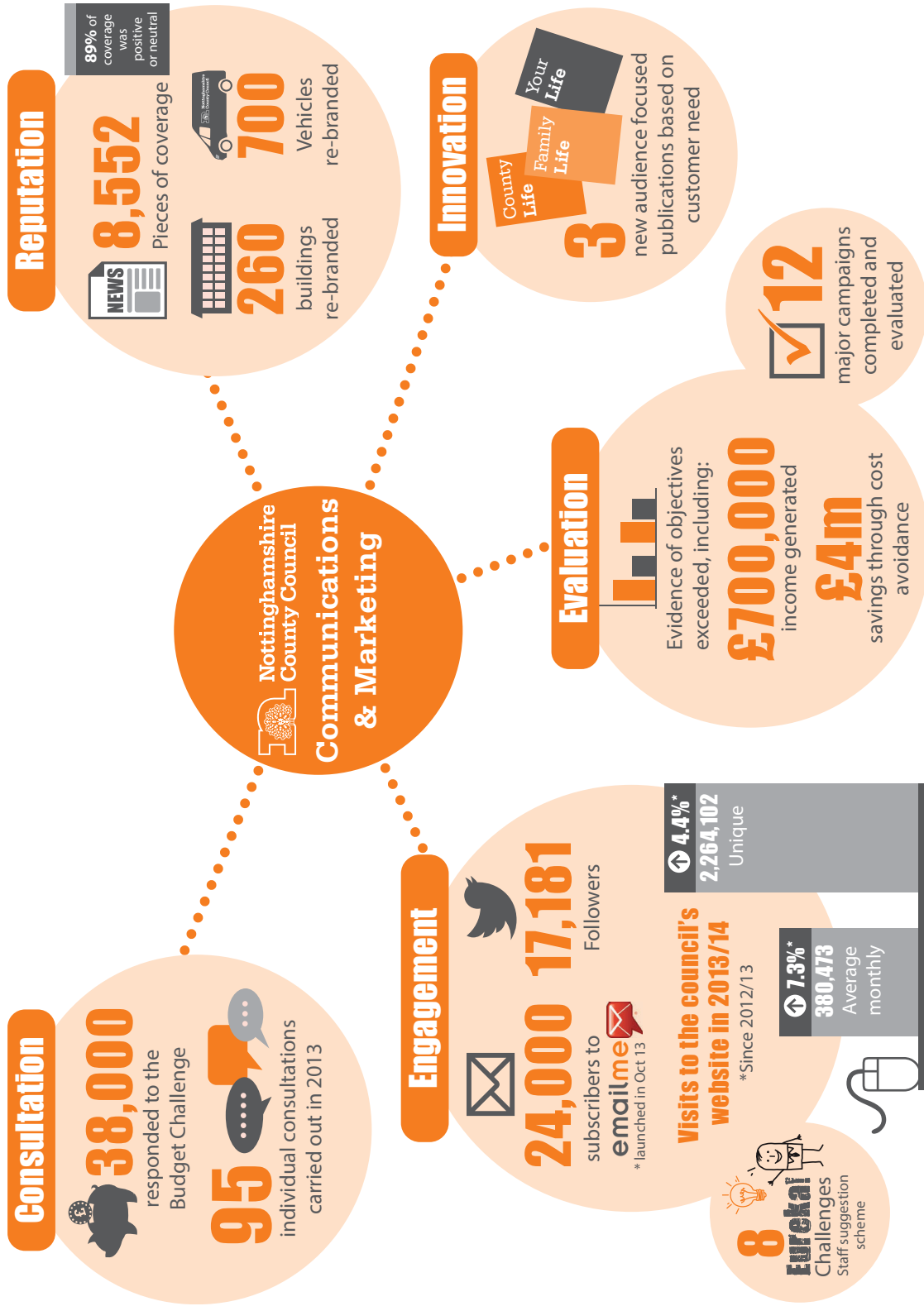
“ the service
aims to lead,
inspire, support and
deliver

Finally, in many cases communications will not only support service delivery, but will become an inherent and increasingly important part of what services offer.

A. APPENDICES

- Delivering Strategic Communications 2013/14
- Case Studies
 - Income Generation
 - Cost Avoidance
 - Reputation
- Outcomes of Strategic Communications 2013/14
- Improvement in Strategic Communications 2010-14

COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING DELIVERING STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS 2013/14



Robin Hood Festival 2013

Communications and Marketing case study

What we set out to achieve?

- Generate income by attracting 10% more visitors to the festival
- Increase the number of website visits to the festival pages by 8%.

What we delivered?

- All campaign objectives were achieved or exceeded
- Income increased by 38% to £193,661
- 50,000 visitors attended the seven-day festival – double the number from 2012
- Each visitor spent on average £3.87
- There were 39,297 visits to the festival web pages – an 8% increase on 2012

Value for money?

- The marketing budget was £8,000
- For every £1 spent on marketing, the council generated £26.61.

How we did it?

- Evidence-based approach used to identify the target audience
- Integrated campaign designed with both online and offline elements
- Printed materials included 90,000 leaflets sent to schools, libraries, leisure centres, hotels and the County Show
- Media campaign generated coverage both locally and nationally
- Digital strategy joined up dedicated web pages, social media activity and digital screens
- Advertising on 52 of our lamp-post banner sites and bus shelters in areas identified as being relevant to the target audience.

Income Generation

Festival events programme



Digital screens



Plinth banner



Festival information posters



Fostering and Adoption 2013/14

Communications and Marketing case study

What we set out to achieve?

- Increase the number of enquiries from people interested in fostering by 5%
- Increase the number of enquiries from people interested in adopting by 5%
- Convert at least 10% of the enquiries into those that actually go on to foster or adopt

What we delivered?

- We received 272 enquiries for adoption – a 55% increase over the previous year
- We received 785 enquiries for fostering – a 35% increase over the previous year
- Out of these enquiries, 111 went on to foster or adopt
- This amounted to 65 new adoption carers – saving the Council £2.1m in agency fees
- In terms of foster carers, there were 46 new recruits which saved the Council £1m.

£3.1m
cost avoided
in one year



Value for money?

- We spent £28,000
- We saved the Council £3.1m in avoidable cost
- For every £1 spent, the Council saved £110 over just the one year.

How we did it?

- Insight gained from previous activity helped form the more targeted strategy
- Media campaign used real people to tell their stories about what they gained from being foster carers
- Digital strategy involved simplifying the customer journeys and refreshing the web content
- Google Adwords and targeted Facebook advertising were used to increase interest
- Advertising on bus shelters, bus backs and lamp-post banners were used along with digital screen advertising in libraries and Mansfield Bus Station
- Posters and flyers were distributed to Council offices, hospitals, GP surgeries, local businesses and schools – all identified as having workers that would be more likely to adopt or foster

Cost Avoidance



Vinyl banners



School flyers



Web banners

Budget Challenge 2013/14

Communications and Marketing case study

What we set out to achieve

- Increase awareness (60%) of why the Council faced a financial challenge
- Achieve at least 1,000 responses to the Strategic Plan consultation
- Deliver at least 20,000 consultation responses to the savings proposals.

What we delivered?

- All campaign objectives exceeded
- The biggest ever response to a Council consultation with 38,412 comments
- This was double the number who responded to the previous highest in 2011-12
- Awareness of the financial challenge was 75% of respondents
- There were 1,600 responses to the Strategic Plan consultation

75%
of respondents felt
more informed



Value for money?

- The budget for the campaign was £8,700
- For every £1 spent, more than 4 responses were generated.

How we did it?

- Three-phased approach between September 2013 and January 2014
- Integrated campaign with both online and offline elements
- Printed materials included booklets, comment cards, posters, flyers and letters to service users and key stakeholders
- Media approach involved face-to-face briefings by the Leader and the Chair of Finance around the County
- Digital tools included a budget simulator, downloadable discussion toolkit, forums, a video of the Leader, targeted emails and social media engagement
- Advertising on the lamp-post banners and digital screens in libraries and Mansfield bus station
- Partnered with the voluntary sector organisations and community groups to maximise value.

Reputation

6 Sheet poster



Digital screens



Roller banner

Plinth banner

COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING OUTCOMES OF STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS 2013/14



COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING IMPROVEMENTS IN STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS 2010-14

- Robin Hood Festival**
August 2011
First year the newly centralised Communications and marketing delivered an integrated campaign to promote the festival. This resulted in a 33% increase in the number of visitors from the previous year.
- Fostering and Adoption**
March 2012
Delivery of an integrated campaign to recruit foster carers and adoptive families. The audience researched campaign resulted in a 100% increase in enquiries for both fostering and adoption.
- Building and Vehicle branding**
November 2012
Consistent and professional presentation of the Council brand on all 260 buildings and 700 vehicles. In 2013 awareness of the brand increased to 50% from 33% the previous year.
- LG Communications award**
June 2013
The Communications and Marketing Group was awarded the most prestigious award at the Local Government Association annual awards in recognition of the consistent high quality of its communications and results.
- Emailme**
October 2013
emailme launched to provide residents with regular emails on a range of council services. This has delivered significant savings and proved popular with 24,000 people registered by June 2014.
- New 'Life' publications**
March 2014
3 new audience based publications developed to replace County News. County Life was delivered to all residents in March with Family Life completed in July and 'Your Life' to follow in October.



(based on 2009/10 results (as no figures for 2011/12))

40%

47%

63%

58%

Resident Satisfaction

Marketing Budget

1.2m

428K

428K

428K

309k

2010/11

2011/12

2012/13

2013/14

2014/15