



Category: Best Use of Photography or Design

Company: West Midlands Police

Entry title: PC Recruitment

Brief and objectives:

To generate interest in the opening of police recruitment for the first time in two years.

Objectives:

1. Increase applications particularly within Black and Minority Ethnic communities of the West Midlands.
2. Raise wider awareness and support for the idea of a police career within under-represented communities within the force.

Rationale behind campaign, including research and planning:

Recruitment for police officers had been on hold while West Midlands Police (WMP) worked through a period of austerity. In 2016 retirement and natural turnover meant we needed to plan for a fresh wave of recruitment, despite financial pressures, to allow our workforce to maintain a level where we could meet the significant demands placed upon us.

A budget of £10,000 was agreed to drive interest and raise awareness – with a specific aim of increasing applications from our Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities, in order to make us more representative of the people we serve.

Our Positive Action team worked with Corporate Communications to identify key locations, communities and groups where applications have been historically low, but have a high number of residents or members from ethnic minority communities. This helped inform where billboard advertising would be located, carrying new, tailored artwork to attract the communities within the locality.

Staff associations, such as the Black and Asian Police Association and the Muslim Police Association, worked with us to provide supporting information, informing decision making around localities and hard to reach communities.

Strategy and tactics, including creativity and innovation:

The budget for this campaign allowed us to be creative in our design and approach.

Officers from across the force were invited to feature in the campaign, showing them as both an officer and as a local citizen.

Key messages were formed around the notion of selling the idea of a police career to people who previously may not have considered joining the force, or may have believed their culture of background formed a barrier.

Our key strapline was: 'Can you see yourself...' – a concept conceived during brainstorming to harness a call to action for people who previously may not have considered a police career, to stop and see an element of themselves in the campaign.

Our photographer was given a brief of showing a reflected image of each officer in uniform and in their own clothes, to appeal to people from a variety of backgrounds. The images perfectly captured a vibrant city centre scene whilst also perfectly demonstrating the professional vs personal work/life balance.

As a force we had not invested in large-scale targeted, billboard advertising for some time and the outlay marked our dedication to the campaign and its intent to get more people to consider a police career.

At launch, on 14 November 2016, artwork was simultaneously replicated across billboard sites and social media, with traditional media outlets also carrying the images as part of their coverage of recruitment as a news event when applications opened on 21 November.

The strapline has evolved to be used for subsequent recruitment campaigns for different roles, including PCSO and Contact officers, to generate a series.

Implementation of tactics:

From brief through to delivery of the campaign was just eight weeks.

The design and creation of the artwork involved three people – a communications manager, our force photographer and graphic designer.

Four officers, who represented members of different communities, agreed to take part in the campaign and the images were all taken across one afternoon on a central Birmingham shopping street, by our solo photographer.

Key channels:

- Outdoor billboard advertising
- Social media
- Local community posters
- Postcards

- Radio advertising across BME specific stations / websites

We worked with ClearChannel to carry the artwork across the region and various media outlets ran the images, without cost, across their news pages and broadcasts.

Outdoor advertising were placed in locations with high footfall and in BME communities.

Measurement and evaluation:

The campaign ultimately achieved its objectives with an uplift in applications and anecdotal information identifying an increase in awareness of the benefits of a police career.

Objective 1:

A total of 3266 applications received from the public, with 33% from people who identified themselves as being from minority ethnic communities, which in real terms totalled 1093 people. This was an increase of 11% from registration of interest phase and an increase on all previous recruitment campaigns.

Objective 2:

Local officers received positive feedback from communities, whilst our Positive Action team received glowing praise from those potential recruits involved in their support programmes. Our recruitment website saw an uplift of almost 20,000 new users, compared with the previous month – an increase of 70% and 35,000 page views to the PC recruitment page – an increase of 222%.

Summary

The artwork featured on the force's Positive Action Facebook group, where approximately 1500 potential recruits had access to the artwork and feedback was hugely positive, while 250 members of BME communities attended briefing events and many told our officers they

had seen it on social media and in their communities and how it had been discussed between family and friends.

Across social media the feedback was positive and even the Home Secretary made contact to praise our recruitment campaign, saying in a letter to the force: "...I am aware that West Midlands continues to be one of the forces that is most proactive in increasing the diversity of its workforce and I welcome the lead being taken...Around two thirds of forces...are recruiting and it is vitally important that this activity builds upon the example set by pioneering forces."

Across Twitter we ran a series of tweets on the main force account over the 14 days that the application phase of recruitment was live, which were widely shared across the 250 official accounts, run by officers, staff and teams.

The main account tweets amassed 317,178 impressions, with 5836 media engagements, which included retweets, likes and link clicks.

A number of other forces, including West Yorkshire and North Wales, have since carried similar campaigns.

Budget and cost effectiveness:

Police officers received no payment, our designer and photographer are staff and generated no cost, therefore the cost implication was purely around delivery of the campaign across the region at six billboard locations, as well as physical posters, postcards, and radio advertising, to the sum total of £10,000.

Outdoor £6106
Targeted radio £3495
Poster / leaflet £350
Total £9951

This equates to £3 per application, in terms of cost effectiveness.