

PRIDE AWARDS 2017

Category: Outstanding In-House Public Relations Team

Company: West Midlands Police

Number of staff employed - including executive / support staff - and annual public relations budget, showing areas directly under the control of the in house team:

West Midlands Police's Corporate Communications Department is one of busiest police communications teams in the UK, with 38 people filling 36 full time equivalent posts.

The team is broken down into: news and social media, internal communications, digital services, engagement, awards and events and freedom of information.

Budget under control of the in-house team:

- £30,000 marketing
- £69,000 awards and events.

Business objectives and analysis of performance against budget over the past three years:

Four key changes happened three years ago, which changed our business objectives: In July 2014, the force officially launched its five year change programme – 'WMP 2020'. We became dedicated to effectively communicating this change and how staff could influence it.

The very nature of our business – crime and vulnerability – saw a shift, with a focus away from traditional crime onto vulnerability and 'hidden crimes' such as forced marriage and child sexual exploitation. Our objective was to change our campaigning from crime prevention to awareness raising, aimed at victims unaware they were victims.

The media climate also shifted, with news production becoming fully digital and more rapid. Our objective was to increase our digital capability, extend our influence across social media and increase our ability to react to the increasing demand for 'live' and 'as it happens' news. The team also took on responsibility for all media communications around counter terrorism across the greater West Midlands region.

A brief overview of business / team strategy:

Corporate Communications is the voice of West Midlands Police.

Our plan is to inspire confidence and trust in West Midlands Police by listening and responding to the needs of those we serve; support police priorities and work with the public to tackle and prevent crime.

A summary of commitment to CPD and professionalism:

Budget constraints have challenged us to develop our people in ways that do not involve paid for external training courses.

We do this by running a series of skills workshops led by members of the team proficient in those areas.

Staff also visit other communicators working within the wider police family and private industry.

Annually we attend the Association of Police Communicators conference to gain ideas and benchmark against peers.

We support junior members of staff studying for in their spare time and fund their professional fees.

A summary of recent outstanding achievements:

In the last 12 months we have:

Developed our own audience

Following on our main Twitter account, @WMPolice, rose more than 60 per cent to 386,000 followers.

Following on our main Facebook page grew 28 per cent with 161,000 likes.

Launched UK policing's first breaking news twitter feed @WMPBreaking, which has 6,000 followers.

Supported almost 300 individual twitter accounts reaching a million followers.

Attracted 1.9million visits to our website, with 4 million views.

Launched our own community messaging tool – WMNow to which 22,000 members of the public are signed up to receive emails from 900 officers.

Media relations

Handled 16,000 media calls, including enquiries on:

- Four high profile terrorism cases
- The conviction of the oldest man in the UK for historical sex offences – he was 101
- A close pass cyclist initiative supported by Chris Boardman, now looking to be replicated by most UK police forces.

Employee engagement

We reinvented the Chief's annual roadshow to promote the WMP2020 change programme. 2,600 staff attended with 77 per cent saying they had a better understanding of the change programme.

Doubled the readership of our daily in-house e-zine 'newsbeat' in a year, to 1,253,000 views

Views on our intranet site rose 22 per cent to 7.3million

The department ran and organised awards evenings, including the annual Diamond Awards attended by 3,500 staff, partners and the public.

Freedom of Information

We handled more than twice as many requests than when the FOI law came in in 2005.

The bulk are from journalists. We made a move to proactively publish data on the force to support our image as a force that's open and transparent.

Developed a new digital content team

The seven strong team are proficient in photography, video, graphics and web design work.

Their skills are being used to professionalise content internally at awards, presentations and roadshows and externally as part of media packages and campaigns.

The team are developing a brand new website which will create a new channel of contact for the public, helping to divert more than 30 per cent of queries away from telephony by 2020.

Campaigns

Our campaigns focussed on finding hidden victims of crime.

Our Christmas domestic abuse campaign focussed on coercive control and represented both male and female victims. We spent £10,000 and reached an audience of 952,423 people. Coercive control reports spiked at 8 the week after the campaign.

We spent £10,000 on our summer child abuse campaign, creating a bespoke video which reached 950,000 people and a radio advert with 1.7million impacts.

We took a radical new approach to awareness raising on forced marriage with a flashmob at Birmingham's Grand Central station – see our campaign spotlight.

A summary of a campaign you are particularly proud of, including details of the brief, objectives, strategy, tactics, outputs, outcomes and budget:

As a force we can only tackle crime we know about. We were asked to create an awareness campaign around forced marriage, a hidden crime that can result in murder.

Our objective was to

- Create awareness of forced marriage
- Create positive debate about who can be a victim and where they can get help
- Emphasise that forced marriage is 'not culture, it's a crime.'

We took a really creative approach – drawing together professional dancers with volunteer student dancers and police officers, we rehearsed a routine to Bruno Mars' 'Marry You' track, to be performed flash mob style at Birmingham's Grand Central Station.

We chose the busiest shopping day of the year to stage two performances – 26 November 2016. The media were invited and we filmed the event for Facebook and You Tube.

We spent £1,865 and to date (16.5.17) the video of the event has reached 1,028,057people. 659,839 of which were via a £1,000 promotion of the video on Facebook, 368,218 were from organic reach.

The video has been viewed a total of 742,105 times, with 3,841 people sharing the content and over a thousand people commenting on the footage.