



CIPR PRIDE AWARDS 2019 GOLD WINNER

Category: Best Use of Content

Company: Cofinitive

Entry title: Improving stakeholder engagement with targeted content execution

Brief and objectives:

cofinitive's client, SmithsonHill, wanted to raise the profile of AgriTech. The sector is new and not clearly understood - and SmithsonHill additionally wanted to improve relations with specific stakeholders as well as with local, regional and national policy makers. cofinitive responded by developing a whitepaper, campaign and associated event.

The idea, research and planning:

To meet client needs and budget, cofinitive planned a nine-month campaign, which included carrying out a detailed stakeholder review and identifying key stakeholders and policy makers. Based on the findings of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Economic Review (CPIER), the UK Industrial Strategy, the UK AgriTech Strategy and the UK Life Sciences Strategy, cofinitive developed a whitepaper as content for a stakeholder engagement campaign.

cofinitive followed a detailed research process, including interviews with AgriTech thought leaders and sector responses to key government policies.

Strategy, tactics, creativity and innovation:

AgriTech is a cutting-edge, highly specialised sector, with an emerging cluster around Cambridge. cofinitive set about promoting fascinating evidence-based content which could inform high-level policy decisions at local, regional and national level and generate interest amongst the general public. To raise the profile of AgriTech further, we put together a carefully researched whitepaper addressing the issues facing the emerging sector and explaining the huge opportunities it holds for the UK.

Policy content and events often lack creativity. They are typically dry, dealing solely with the specific issue/stakeholder group, ignoring crossovers between sectors/demographics, and rarely straying from their core audience. Conversely, our whitepaper was designed to challenge the sector norm – involving a cross-section of business, agriculture, research, policy makers, industry examples, quotes from specialists, and graphics to produce

engaging content. These inspiring graphics highlighted the potential for innovation within the sector and demonstrated how the sector will deliver key government strategies. Our design included call-out boxes with quotes from representatives from the AgriTech industry and references to key government policy documents such as the CPIER Report and Industrial Strategy. The whitepaper was illustrated with infographics designed to sit alongside the content but which could also be used as standalone graphics within the social media campaign.

The engagement event was designed to involve target stakeholders in a dialogue about the emerging AgriTech cluster, whilst inspiring collaboration across the sector, and raising the profile of SmithsonHill. Stakeholders who attended included national policy makers such as MPs and Members of the House of Lords, AgriTech strategists such as Collison Associates, researchers such as the Sainsbury Lab and CERES at Cambridge University, entrepreneurs like Aponic, Hummingbird Technologies and Entomic, and funders such as Cambridge AgriTech.

Delivery:

cofinitive designed an integrated nine-month campaign, with a whitepaper forming the core of content which was shared at an event for 85+ industry representatives at the House of Commons. We followed with a social media campaign using infographics, quotes and videos from the event.

cofinitive's preparations started with stakeholder mapping, targeting and research before invitations for the event were sent out for the event at the House of Commons. As well as issuing press releases to media, we circulated the whitepaper to attendees, interested stakeholders and delivered a vigorous associated social media campaign throughout Q1 2019.

The whitepaper was developed in collaboration with a key AgriTech strategist, outlining how AgriTech will help deliver key government strategies, with quotes from representatives from the AgriTech industry, illustrated with infographics throughout. The infographics were designed to sit alongside the whitepaper content and be used as standalone graphics within the social media campaign, maximising the budget available.

Measurement and evaluation:

Across the campaign, SmithsonHill saw an increase in followers and strong engagement on Twitter. There was an increase in Twitter followers in the first month of the campaign. The online whitepaper page attracted a high number of unique visitors across the campaign with visitors spending, on average, one minute longer on that page than any other page on the site. It also boasted the lowest bounce rate across the site.

The engagement event was hugely successful. Event attendees commented: 'What an event! Thanks SmithsonHill' and 'So proud to have been part of this event, thanks SmithsonHill and George Freeman'. The event also enjoyed positive online engagement, with guests posting on social media about attending, sharing posts about the whitepaper and engaging with follow-up press articles.

Budget and campaign impact:

cofinitive secured international press coverage with industry press, resulting in inbound enquiries for SmithsonHill. Locally, the feeling about AgriTech is much more positive, with many now seeing the benefits that the growing sector is bringing. AgriTech is now included in the Local Industrial Strategy.

We'll leave the last words to Emma Fletcher, Managing Director, SmithsonHill:

“Cofinitive has been a real asset to our work. They recognise and understand the importance we place on engagement, especially its sensitivities, and execute it with due care and attention. The AgriTech event in the House of Commons was a huge success, and I have been very pleased with the ongoing engagement with the whitepaper.”