Category: Best Event

Company: Smart Energy GB and Message Matters

Entry title: Cooking local, cooking Smart

Brief and objectives:
Smart Energy GB is the voice of the smart meter rollout. Our task is to engage everyone in Great Britain about the benefits of smart meters so they are enthusiastic and confident about having one installed.

‘Cooking local, cooking Smart’ was an event undertaken in September 2017 as part of Smart Energy GB’s Scottish strategy to encourage parliamentarians to become public advocates for the rollout. The event objectives were:

- To develop a relevant activity that would engage as many MSPs as possible during Scottish Food and Drink Fortnight
- To increase awareness among MSPs and their staff of Smart Energy GB, the national rollout, and how smart meters can be used to see real-time information about energy usage
- To maximise the number of MSPs using their own online and social communications channels to disseminate information about the smart meter rollout.

Rationale behind event, including research and planning:
Twice a year, Smart Energy GB conducts the largest British survey of energy customers. This ‘Outlook’ data from August 2017 showed that for those consumers who have already upgraded, smart meters are having a bit impact in helping households to reduce their energy use.

For instance, 80 per cent said that they had taken new steps to save energy as a result of getting a smart meter, and 68 per cent said they felt more conscious about their energy use.

Therefore, we sought to identify an activity that would both lead to MSPs amplifying these benefits in particular, and would also incorporate a Scottish element to fit with the location and with Scottish Food and Drink Fortnight.

Strategy and tactics, including creativity and innovation:
Smart Energy GB and Message Matters designed an event based around a live cookery
demonstration within the Scottish Parliament canteen, at which MSPs could participate and could see the real-time cost of their cooking using a smart meter.

Working with the Scottish Parliament's Executive Chef, we created a bespoke recipe for a stir fry using Scottish ingredients (costed at 5p to cook, using a smart meter), which was also available on the day in printed form. Scottish Food and Drink Fortnight presented an opportunity for Smart Energy GB to reach a much wider audience by developing a message around using energy efficiency cooking to keep the costs of cooking local low.

The lively cooking demonstration, with the combination of local produce and low-cost cooking themes, provided an original experience for passing MSPs and staff.

A core pillar of the strategy was to encourage MSPs to become campaign advocates, based on their ability to communicate effectively with local people through digital, social, and local print media. Every MSP was offered the opportunity to have their photo taken while cooking a stir fry with the Executive Chef.

**Implementation of tactics, including details of design, production and support teams employed:**

**July 2017**
- Met with Scotland Food and Drink to discuss potential collaboration
- Initial meeting with Scottish Parliament's facilities and catering team

**August**
- Worked with Executive Chef to agree recipe
- Worked with in-house design team to create recipe card
- Worked to publicise event internally at the Scottish Parliament, and to key MSPs with existing relationships
- Finalised event details and design with Parliament team, including smart meter demonstration board, cooking stall.

**September**
- Executed event
- Photos and press releases sent to all MSPs who attended.

**Measurement and evaluation:**

During the core one-hour of the event, 45 MSPs - one third of all MSPs - engaged with the stall and conversations about the smart meter rollout.

This included:
- 5 party leaders or leadership candidates
- 4 Cabinet Secretaries
- 6 Government Ministers
- 6 Shadow Cabinet members

33 of the 45 MSPs (73 per cent) had their photo taken at the stall and many of them published their visit to the stall on their Twitter accounts, which resulted in 371,889 impressions cumulatively.
The sentiment in the social media coverage from MSPs was overwhelmingly positive about the event, smart meters and Smart Energy GB.

Notable and high-reach tweets came from Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson, Brexit Minister Michael Russell and Transport Minister Humza Yousaf.

In addition to the desired channels, the event secured coverage in three Scottish local newspapers through MSP local press activity.

The event was a key pillar in the delivery of Smart Energy GB’s overall public affairs strategy for 2017 in Scotland. The results of this strategy were analysed by ComRes through independent research with legislators. The year-on-year research showed:

- An increase in awareness of Smart Energy GB among MSPs from 55% to 75%
- A decrease in negative sentiment among MSPs from 22% to 13%
- An increase in MSPs recalling communication with Smart Energy GB from 57% to 80%
- An increase in MSPs who have actively communicated with others about the national smart meter rollout from 26% to 79%

**Budget and cost effectiveness:**

Budget: £300

Recipe design: In-house
Recipe card printing: £100
Photography: £200