



Category: Best Event

Company: Telford College

Entry title: 7th Form Launch - A UK-first for education

Brief and objectives:

Telford College is a newly-merged organisation between TCAT and New College Telford. The college is due to be run from one site from September 2018.

There are four sixth forms and two colleges in the area. To attract potential students to the college it developed a new concept for A level provision to stand out from competitors.

The college developed the sixth form model by taking A levels and directly linking them with 10 career pathways that feed directly into partner universities and combined it with industry mentors from local companies.

The concept was to support students to map the next 10 year of their lives alongside new learning technology in virtual/augmented reality and was branded as the 7th Form.

The 7th Form needed to be official launched to the local community and drive applications for September 2018.

1. To attract 1,000 attendees to the launch by October 2017
2. To secure eight pieces of media coverage by October 2017
3. To increase event attendance by 20% compared to the previous year
4. To have 85% customer satisfaction for the event
5. To receive 75 applications by the end of the event

Rationale behind event, including research and planning:

The college hosted the launch on the same night as its first open event. This ensured resources and budget were shared. The event was marketed as an A level specialist event.

Open events are one of the best recruitment tools colleges have at their disposal. Prior to the merger between both organisations, the communications team created a new format for open events.

As this was a new concept the college needed to engage with parents, students, employers and the community to showcase the college, what it has to offer and to demonstrate “education to career path” options to students.

During the research stage planning took place of key dates around competitors to Telford College would be the first of the year. Research was undertaken on what activity could be included at the event to ensure it met students’ and parents’ needs.

Research took place linked to what destinations students achieved and aligned it to the curriculum to ensure the open event wasn’t just about post-16 education, but progression and future careers.

There were challenges to work around including bringing over New College staff and equipment site to the TCAT campus and making the event seamless despite major decisions not being made regarding where teaching facilities from in September 2018.

Strategy and tactics, including creativity and innovation:

Competitors – the event was positioned ahead of competitors compared to previous years to ensure the college had the opportunity to make a first and lasting impression.

Digital – The college undertook a digital-first approach to the event with advertising online to target prospective students and also sponsoring key words on competitor websites and events on Google Adwords.

The college digitised the registration process via Akerio so that automated email communication drove attendance to the event and customer experience on arrival was seamless.

Parent influence – Research shows parents have the biggest influence in a student’s decision making. Elements of the event were tailored for parents including a parent guide, key messages in the presentation and long term student success.

Partnerships – The college worked on outreach with schools and careers advisors to drive their students to the event. The college called upon university and employer partners to support the event. This supported the event by showing clear career progression routes through school to college to university and into employment.

Media – The college worked closely with media prior to the event and they were officially invited to cover the event.

Innovation – The event was shortened compared to previous years to create a busier and more atmospheric event. All elements of the event were interactive to ensure customers were engaged across the campus.

The college had dedicated application and interview areas throughout the campus so students could leave the event with a conditional offer for September.

Virtual reality equipment was brought in to demonstrate how technology would be used from September.

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

Due to this being the first time the newly-merged college was to host a joint event a cross-department working group was set up to set clear actions, deadlines and responsibilities.

To unite the two sites and shift previous cultures it was agreed staff from across the college including business support were to support the event.

The design of the event was to be open between 5pm to 7.30pm with regular 7th Form presentations taking place throughout and interactive activities for each area.

The entire college campus was open to showcase curriculum within teaching facilities and student ambassadors were recruited to give tours to customers with employers and university embedded in areas.

A guide was produced to provide information about the 7th Form, the newly-merged college and the event.

To communicate plans with staff on both sites there were regular all staff emails, training sessions for staff in their event roles and a final briefing to ensure the event ran smoothly.

Measurement and evaluation:

We used the following to measure event impact:

- Akero – CRM/event software
 - Survey Monkey – to measure customer satisfaction
 - ProSolution – College application system
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1. To attract 1,000 attendees to the launch by October 2017 – the college attracted 1,506 attendees to the event
 2. To secure eight pieces of media coverage by October 2017 – the college secured ten pieces of media coverage
 3. To increase event attendance by 20% compared to the previous year – the college increase its year on year attendance by 81%
 4. To have 85% customer satisfaction for the event – the college achieved 94% customer satisfaction
 5. To receive 75 applications by the end of the event – the college received 124 applications on the night

Budget and cost effectiveness:

£2,000 – Facebook/Instagram advertising

£2,000 – Newspaper wrap advert

£2,000 – Radio advertising

£2,000 – Google adwords

£400 – Open event guide

£500 – 7th Form Signage

£3,570 – Comms staffing (Hourly rate x hours spent on project)

£12,470 – Total

The value of funding per student is £4,000 based on the applications the college received during the event this would bring in £496,000. For every £1 spent on the campaign it generated a £40 return.