



Category: Outstanding In-House Public Relations Team

Company: South Wales Fire and Rescue Service

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

The Media & Communications Team at South Wales Fire and Rescue Service has nine team members, a Manager, Lead Communication and Engagement Officer, two E-Comms & Graphic Design Officers, a Multimedia Designer, a Website and Digital Communications Officer and Assistant, an Engagement, Attraction and Communication Officer and a Communication Assistant.

Our remit as a team is extensive, encompassing all internal and external activity.

Internal communication is delivered through a vibrant schedule of intranet content, newsletters, staff briefings, video and staff engagement events, successfully overcoming challenges such as how to engage with a workforce of more than 1700 people based at multiple sites.

Externally we use a vast collective of platforms and tools to share a wide range of messages and marketing materials to a very diverse audience. We are responsible for all website and social media content (including support for all Stations), campaign design and delivery, press liaison, brand management and reputational management, graphic design and print of all Service materials, video production, engagement events, recruitment promotion and partnership development.

The annual budget is currently £60,000. This is allocated to a range of both pre-planned and responsive risk reduction and promotional activity supporting the strategic objectives of a busy and vibrant Service.

This budget is ultimately the responsibility of the Media & Communications Manager, however frequent discussion and consultation with colleagues remains key to the decision process. This ensures we have objectives and clear, measurable aims in place from earliest planning stage and that the information we impart successfully delivers on these aims. Approval discussions are held regularly with the Head of SP&C –facilitating positive communication with the Senior Management Team.

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

The Media and Communications Team is core to the successful delivery of South Wales Fire and Rescue Service's strategic objectives.

- Strategic Objective 1: To reduce risk in our communities
- Strategic Objective 2: Raise our communities' awareness to risk and help them prevent emergencies from occurring

The team has developed at least two large scale PR campaigns over the last three years – 2 in 2015, 2 in 2016, 3 in 2017 with a further 3 planned for 2018. Each of these campaigns was delivered within budget set with a small residual amount reserved for future campaigning.

The performance against the budget has been supported by a close working relationship with the Service's Statistics & Risks team. This has ensured campaigns can be targeted to key communities, and that the resulting statistics demonstrate impact and a clear reduction of risk.

A brief overview of business / team strategy:

Our strategy is to continue evolving as a key department within the organisation producing communication and engagement campaigns, supporting partnership messaging, developing vibrant and innovative internal and external activity and utilising new opportunities to positively raise the profile of our Service.

Key also is our commitment, through continued training and implementation of new mechanisms, to further develop our digital presence across multiple platforms in response to changing trends and audience requirements.

A summary of commitment to CPD and professionalism:

Professional development is key in supporting our growing team.

We operate a training strategy and skill matrix which ensures team members have the opportunity to further strengthen skills, as well as pursue new skills which support the aims of the team. Each member has the opportunity to attend courses - seminars, workshops, conferences – and learning and best practice are shared with the wider team upon return. Training needs and opportunities are discussed regularly at team meetings and reviewed with individuals on a quarterly basis. Team members proactively seek learning opportunities with partner organisations and weekly webinar learning sessions.

A summary of recent outstanding achievements:

We recently unveiled our brand new website for SWFRS. This much-awaited resource is the result of a 12 month project with the clear aim of improving and evolving the ways in which we communicate with our multiple audiences. The new website better supports our strategic

aims by providing us with the opportunity to incorporate emergency updates, video, direct links to Stations, family-friendly games and interactive tools.

In addition we have taken our internal newsletter online increasing opportunity for us to begin sharing video content and live links with staff. As well as being a much more effective and engaging way of communicating with staff across Headquarters, our Training Centre and 47 Stations, this has also seen print costs cut significantly. Feedback has been positive with staff more engaged in contributing content.

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

The *Who would you Call?* (#WWYC) campaign of 2017 was delivered through the summer when statistics show water-related incidents are at their highest. Social media-led, it used a variety of digital content that targeted our specific demographic (males aged between 20 and 24). Engagement was facilitated by creating scenarios around water incidents which put our viewer in the place of a person at the scene faced with making a 999 call. Each video ended with a Control Room Operator asking for the emergency service they require and viewers encouraged to respond by voting for the service they would choose by using emoji symbols.

Social media engagement sample:

Facebook:

- 2 videos
- 15,067 views
- 46,594 people reached

In 2018 SWFRS tackled the issue of False Fire Alarms with a bilingual radio advert that reached 268,000 listeners (Heart South Wales) and 44,000 listeners (Smooth Radio). This was supported by press releases and TV news interviews. Response has been positive and increased opportunities for us to engage with businesses across South Wales.

SWFRS has recently launched our latest recruitment campaign *Be More* which promotes the essential role of the On-Call firefighter, encouraging applications. This is primarily a digital campaign, utilising four video scenarios, but will also incorporate a branded vehicle, recruitment events, radio advertising, press and case studies.