



Category: Best Event

Company: AMBITIOUS

Entry title: Bringing Social Media Week to Bristol

Brief and objectives:

Bristol Media (BM) is an industry led organisation whose purpose is to facilitate collaboration, connectivity and build the fame of the region for the creative and media sector it represents.

BM tasked AMBITIOUS with creating an event platform that would meet the following objectives:

1. Bang the drum and build the 'fame' of the region and help put Bristol's creative media sector on the national and international map to showcase the talent, career opportunities and progressive thinking of the city
2. Skill-up the city and promote knowledge sharing and best practice. Focus on priority sectors of the region e.g. fintech, tourism, food and drink and start up/SME's
3. Add value, engage and make new connections to support and grow Bristol Media's 500 strong membership
4. Make the event financially viable. Cover all fees and expenses by raising sponsorship and securing other income streams to make it a full cost recovery initiative

After preparing and submitting an application, AMBITIOUS secured the opportunity for BM to be granted a licence to host global conference, Social Media Week in November 2016 – becoming the only other city outside of London in the UK to join the 25 city strong global conference platform.

AMBITIOUS was tasked to run every aspect of Social Media Week Bristol (#SMWiBristol) from concept development through to execution.

Rationale behind event, including research and planning:

A clear strategy evolved from our research and planning:

- **Ambassador panel:** To inform and add rigor to the planning, AMBITIOUS' set up an 'Ambassador' group comprising respected bloggers, Youtubers and other prominent

social media influencers. The group acted as a sounding board, shared insight, helped decide event themes and curate event content (and later amplify activity). The panel met monthly and we called them regularly to road test ideas

- **Mutually Beneficial Partnerships:** Identified and engaged with Bristol's key business networks and regional trade bodies that share some of BM's objectives including Invest Bristol and Bath, Business West, CIPR, PRCA, BIMA, TechSPARK. Support included their input to the programme, endorsement and amplification of message through their networks
- **Member Research:** Reached out to BM members, conducting qualitative research (face to face) to understand common business challenges, what they wanted from #SMWiBristol in order guide us in developing relevant content and price points for events
- **Global Dialogue:** Created dialogue with many of the 25 global cities that host Social Media Week to take key learnings from them, test concepts and set up channels to showcase #SMWiBristol internationally

Media Relations: To secure media support we undertook media briefings early on engage journalists in our planning and secure event support but also involved them in the programme and speaking opportunities to ensure they had a vested interest

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

Our research helped us to firm up a commercially sound, creatively-led and well-informed strategy that meant stakeholders felt they had a vested interest in #SMWiBristol. Our strategy and tactics set out to ensure everyone had 'skin in the game' so it became a collaborative undertaking and this encouraged excitement and a spirit of support around the execution of the event.

Venue strategy: Stayed true to the spirit of Bristol and avoided the 'usual' conference centres. Instead, hosting in inspiring spaces across the city that reflect the creative industry. This included Everyman Cinema, Engine Shed and award winning offices of OVO energy.

Event Programme: Ensured the events reflected the region's economic priorities to make it super relevant. And, that it addressed sector challenges by providing opportunities for roundtables/thought leadership to move discussion forward

Partner Marketing: Amplify our messaging through our own efforts and by recruiting and inspire partners to support through toolkit of communication material that **they could** co-promote, publish and share

Pricing: Deliberately avoided high-ticket prices and sponsorship fees in order to ensure the event was right for Bristol and accessible to meet original objectives. Kept production costs low □□□□□□□□securing free host venues and mobilised community support. Tickets

priced at £5 to £35

Delivery

- AMBITIOUS liaised with a local designer to provide collateral
- AMBITIOUS curated all content on EventBrite
- Events were treated as 'pop up' in style to reflect the creative community centric positioning of #SMWiBristol
- Support services such as video were provided by supporters in exchange for tickets. This was factored into the full-cost recovery of the project.

Partner and sponsor recruitment

- SMWiBristol identified 75 targets for sponsorship and secured 30 sponsors and partners

Events

- Created 50 inspiring events tailored to suit all levels of social media understanding. This included beginner, intermediate and advanced sessions. Sessions were practical e.g. 'how to' use Instagram, video content and analytics. They promoted thought leadership and best practice. We secured headline speakers from Facebook, Twitter, BuzzFeed and Glassdoor as well as regional champions such as Aardman Animation and Yogscast
- AMBITIOUS also secured venue sponsors free of charge to reduce production costs

Marketing

- Creating a network of influencers who acted as event promoters across their respective networks both on and offline
- Presented #SMWiBristol at sector events across Bristol to garner support including Destination Bristol, Bristol's tourism body and many relevant MeetUp groups

Social Media

- Recruited and branded a digital squad made up of volunteers to report from key events, ensuring 'live' coverage and event buzz
- Created paid for posts and In-mails to promote the event including boosted posts on Facebook and LinkedIn In-mails to Bristol-based social media managers
- Created a social media toolkit for sponsors, partners and ambassadors which included suggested tweets, posts, links, event #hashtags, sponsor and venue @Twitter addresses

Engaged with other Social Media Week's on social media platforms

Measurement and evaluation:

Outcomes

- 100% self funded
- 1,500 delegates: Exceeded expectations by securing attendance of over 400 Bristol Media members plus attendees from over 1,000 businesses including Screwfix, DAS, Hargreaves Lansdown, Triodos, Zurich, Age UK, Unite and prominent SMEs including Lovely Drinks and Pukka Herbs.
- Secured 50 high profile speakers from Facebook, Buzzfeed, Twitter, Glassdoor, General Assembly, Visit Britain and Yahoo
- Secured 30 plus partners and sponsors including OVO, Samsung and Business West, Bristol 247, General Assembly and UWE
- Bristol Media benefitted from new relationships forged as part of #SMWiBristol including TINT, Yantra Live Streaming, Spectrum Internet and Everyman Cinema
- Trending live on Twitter on day one (main social channel we selected). 145 people (98%) said 'bring it back next year' via 24hr Twitter poll. Overwhelming positive feedback across social media channels – high levels of engagement, interactions & sharing during the week
- Connections and collaborations secured included the hosting of international delegation from #SMWiAustin, Texas
- Free ticket allocation given to Babassa youth group, UWE students, City of Bristol College to support knowledge building amongst the next generation.

Budget and cost effectiveness:

The event was a full cost recovery project - as a result of AMBITIOUS delivering cash sponsorship income, ticket sales income and production partners offering benefit in kind such as venues.