

The logo for the CIPR PRIDE AWARDS 2019 Gold Winner. It features the text "CIPR PRIDE AWARDS 2019" in white on a black background, followed by "GOLD WINNER" in large, multi-colored letters (pink, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple).

Category: Transport or Automotive Campaign

Company: London PR

Entry title: Driving traffic

Brief and objectives:

Car leasing specialists Central Contracts operate on a nationwide basis from their HQ in Stoke on Trent. They supply business and private customers with thousands of cars every year online through their websites LeaseCar.uk and LeaseVan.co.uk.

They asked London PR to deliver an online PR campaign focused on improving the organic search traffic to each site.

Working on a retained basis we agreed the following objectives for the year June 2018 to May 2019:

1. Goals agreed for the year of 100 items of media coverage for each of the two websites
2. At least 20 PR generated hyperlinks into each of the websites from high authority media sites
3. Increase organic search traffic into each site by 10%.

The idea, research and planning:

Taking a long term view we set about positioning LeaseCar and LeaseVan as the consumer champions of car and van drivers in the UK.

We would do this through a series of campaigning news articles highlighting the issues facing car and van drivers in Britain today.

This required a large amount of research as we probed exactly which issues most concerned UK drivers.

We utilised the client's database of customers, sending out questions to their mailing list and inviting them to identify the factors which most concerned them. These included vehicle safety, speed cameras, parking fines and vehicle maintenance.

We also made use of insights from the Department of Transport including crash statistics and contributing factors compiled from police information.

Another very simple source for stories was a copy of the Highway Code. Purchased from Amazon for £1.98, it proved a fertile reference book for motoring stories as we set about highlighting surprising rules of the road that many drivers may not be aware of.

Strategy, tactics, creativity and innovation:

Our strategy was to make the websites into the consumer champions of car and van drivers in the UK.

Key tactic was regular brainstorms informed by data supplied by the client and our own research. These would fuel a high volume of quality stories. Each story would champion car and van drivers and address their concerns.

We issued more than 100 stories over the year or - around half a dozen per month for each site. Each story had two or three embedded hyperlinks into either LeaseCar.uk or LeaseVan.co.uk.

Strands identified:

Campaigning stories - such as calls for busy mums and dads to be able to use bus lanes during the school run, calls for dedicated van parking bays at supermarkets, and calls for the Highway Code to be taught in schools.

Warning stories - examples included Van drivers warned on common defects, Motorists warned to check tyre pressures, Drivers warned over winter road conditions, Towing warning to drivers who passed their tests after 1 January 1997 (their license doesn't cover towing), and Unexpected parking rules which land drivers with fines.

Advice / insight stories - such as What to expect on a speed awareness course, Dos and don'ts of de-icing your vehicle and keeping pets safe in cars, tips for driving in difficult weather conditions, top tips for new drivers etc.

Pure Listicles - examples included Nine types of speed cameras, Nine common road markings you may not understand, Ten places you should never park, Eight medical conditions you must tell the DVLA about etc.

Reactive stories - we kept a close eye on the news agenda for any breaking motoring stories we could jump on. Most notably we had great success with a story titled How to avoid a ban like Beckham's.

Two versions of each story were produced. One to be published first as a blog post on one or other of the client's two websites. The second version was the media release written in more journalistic language with higher news value and pointing the media to the blog post, encouraging links.

Delivery:

New stories were issued for each site every week and we soon got into a rhythm of writing, issuing and selling in.

We targeted both national and regional media with results appearing across the websites of every national newspaper, many specialist car, van and trades sites and hundreds of regional titles.

Measurement and evaluation:

Our target, agreed at the beginning of the 12 month period, was 100 coverage items and 20 links into each site.

We delivered a total of 1594 items of coverage naming either LeaseCar.uk or LeaseVan.co.uk - an eight times multiple over our agreed target.

Total OTS exceeded 9.5m (Source: CoverageBook.com).

Coverage won included a total of 438 hyperlinks from media sites into the client's website - an eleven times multiple over our agreed target of 20 to each site.

These results average out at 132 items of media coverage and 36 links for EVERY MONTH OF THE YEAR.

This was split as follows: Lease Car 1117 items of coverage and 280 links. An average of 93 coverage items and 23 links per month. Lease Van, 477 coverage items and 158 links, an average of 39 items of coverage and 13 links each month.

At the outset of the year we had also agreed a goal of increasing organic traffic to each site by 10%.

Analytics data provided by the client at time of submission in May shows organic traffic to LeaseCar.uk has increased by 19.21% while the organic traffic to LeaseVan.uk has increased by a whopping 65.54%.

Budget and campaign impact:

We spent three days of activity on each site every month of the campaign at a blended day rate of £650 plus VAT. So total fee was £3900 a month or £46,800 over the year.

The increase in organic search visibility over both sites led to an uplift in sales and helped enable the client to expand further by purchasing the adjoining office building and further growing their team.