



CIPR PRIDE AWARDS 2019 GOLD WINNER

Category: Arts, Culture or Sport Campaign

Company: Aberdeen Performing Arts and BIG Partnership

Entry title: Music Hall Stepping In campaign

Brief and objectives:

Aberdeen Performing Arts worked in conjunction with BIG Partnership to promote the re-opening of Aberdeen's Music Hall following a two and a half year Transformation project, and to create a buzz and excitement around the Music Hall re-opening by promoting the Stepping In Day – a day-long programme of free community-focussed events and performances.

Objectives:

1. Generate regular regional coverage throughout weeks and months leading up to re-opening with at least 80% displaying positive sentiment for the project
2. Generate high profile media coverage over the Stepping In weekend, on a regional and national level
3. Create engaging digital content to increase engagement of the campaign on social channels
4. Attract 10,000 people through the doors on the first day of being open – Stepping In Day.

The idea, research and planning:

The Stepping In campaign had to communicate and publicise the re-opening of the Music Hall, with an undertone that conveyed the benefits to the local community of the Music Hall being opened, while highlighting the transformed venue as an iconic, historic building in the city centre landscape, whose future was secured by the transformation project. We wanted to foster and encourage the public's emotional connection to the Music Hall.

This was underpinned by an ongoing fundraising campaign for the Music Hall Transformation.

We undertook a stakeholder mapping exercise to identify and prioritise the diverse range of stakeholders, conducting research into their views and exploring what messages we needed to communicate to influence and encourage their involvement and support. These included:

- Press, media, bloggers: local, regional, national
- Influencers: Friends, business partners, arts organisations, social media followers
- Audiences and potential audiences: all APA venues, local and regional
- Artists
- Public: Aberdeen City and Shire
- Donors, advocates, volunteers
- Specialist groups, societies, business, youth, schools
- Community partners
- Business partners
- Volunteers.

Our campaign was then developed to target all of the above.

Strategy, tactics, creativity and innovation:

Under the banner of 'Stepping In' we created a brand identity which captured the imagination of the public and important stakeholders and supporters, conveying our strong community focused message and ultimately spreading the message that the Music Hall was about to re-open.

'Stepping In' followed on from our 'Stepping Out' campaign, launched in 2016 to keep the spirit of the Music Hall alive throughout the closure with performances held in alternative venues across the city. By changing the focus to 'Stepping In' we were turning attention back to the building and looking to the future of the venue as a fully functioning, restored and reimagined venue with a bright future.

We created a programme for Stepping In Day which explained our objectives, the background of the project, community involvement and our plans for the day.

We distributed

- Around 100,000 flyers
- Over 122,000 e-flyers.

We designed a Music Hall logo which resonated with Aberdeen Performing Arts' wider brand identity, with the slogan 'We're Stepping In'.

We distributed

- 200 window stickers
- 100 posters

- 1,000 badges.

We agreed a media partnership with Aberdeen Journals, whereby they were given exclusives on all Music Hall related news in the months leading up to the re-opening, as well as first-look access prior to the re-opening on December 8 2018.

We became the leading contributor in Aberdeen to the Year of Young People Scottish Govt initiative, thereby tapping in to their coverage and extending our reach to a new audience.

Delivery:

Two days before opening, we invited Aberdeen Journals to take photos for a 'first look' inside the refurbished building. These were published on the Friday, creating a buzz and increasing coverage regarding Stepping In Day. Our own photographer also took photos, which were distributed to wider press on Friday morning.

On Friday – one day before opening - we invited other key press into the building for their own 'sneak peek' and interviews with our CEO, Jane Spiers, attracting broadcast coverage across BBC Scotland, STV, Orignal FM and Northsound radio in advance of our opening celebrations.

We secured Fran Healy, lead singer of Travis, to take part in the opening, performing his band's hit 'Sing' with the Music Hall Community Choir.

This perfectly encapsulated Aberdeen Performing Arts' dedication to securing world class artists and attracting them to the city, while keeping the local community at the heart of what we do at the Music Hall.

Programme of events for the day included performances and participation from a broad spectrum of the community, of all ages and abilities, creating a feeling of inclusion. This culminated in the 'Big Sing', where choirs and individuals were encouraged to come to the auditorium and sing four songs to mark and celebrate the opening.

We arranged for press to attend the opening day, organising print and broadcast interviews with Fran Healy and representatives from APA. A unique photocall was organised featuring the singer and our CEO cutting a giant celebration cake constructed like the Music Hall, with a press release detailing all the activity and a supportive quote from Fran Healy distributed nationally and locally. This ensured blanket coverage across several days, and the momentum was carried into the following week.

Measurement and evaluation:

Objective 1 results: We generated monthly coverage for the Music Hall throughout 2018, with over 120 pieces of coverage, 93% of which had a positive or neutral tone, with 7% displaying a negative tone.

Objective 2 results: We received high profile coverage from national and regional TV, radio and print media over our Stepping In weekend, including BBC, STV, The Herald, Sunday

Post, Daily Mail and Sunday Times. Overall from 8-10th December, press coverage led to approx. 145,080,092 opportunities to see (OTS).

Objective 3 results: We launched an 'On this Day' social media campaign, sharing significant moments the Music Hall's history in the months leading up to re-opening. Our Young Ambassadors staged a social media takeover. We held a daily countdown to opening on our social media channels beginning 10 days prior to re-opening to build momentum.

The #SteppingIn was used on our Twitter and Facebook pages, with the following results:

Channel Impressions Engagements Share Like Comment

Total Facebook Impressions from APA Facebook and Music Hall Facebook pages 733,431
27,868 5411 2152 1132

Channel Impressions Engagements Retweets Replies Likes

APA Twitter page 113,839 2,741 99 9 251

Channel Total Website Users Music Hall Page Views Music Hall Unique Page Views

APA Website 274,724 15,485 12,983

Objective 5 results: More than 11,000 people attended Stepping In Day, with a steady crowd from the official opening at 9.30am until the finale at 4pm.