



CIPR PRIDE AWARDS 2019 GOLD WINNER

Category: Not-for-Profit Campaign

Company: Crystallised

Entry title: Cheeseburn: Creating a North East Destination for Sculpture

Brief and objectives:

Cheeseburn Sculpture is a unique destination for contemporary art in Northumberland. It is a charity funded by donations and through trusts and foundations such as the Gillian Dickinson Trust.

Its open season (from the first May bank holiday weekend to the first weekend in September) comprises six weekends per year featuring three curated gallery exhibitions and 60 sculptures within the gardens.

Crystallised's brief was to attract visitors within the somewhat limited parameters of the estate; a lived-in home with a working sheep farm and a place of worship; it can only accommodate 1,000 visitors per weekend, and is only accessible by car. Crystallised was also tasked with attracting credible visitors that matched Cheeseburn's values of supporting creative artistic projects rather than simply increasing visitor numbers.

Crystallised's objectives for the 2018/19 season:

1. To increase annual visitor numbers by 10%
2. To increase annual donations by 10%
3. To raise awareness by securing at least three pieces of media coverage in regional titles per weekend (18 pieces in total) each open season.

Due to the timeframe of the CIPR PRide Awards, this entry outlines the performance of the campaign from July 2018 to May 2019.

The idea, research and planning:

Crystallised carried out research to understand Cheeseburn's audience, challenges and opportunities.

As the only major outdoor sculpture offer between Yorkshire Sculpture Park in Wakefield and Jupiter Artland in Edinburgh (233 miles between the two), Crystallised identified an opportunity to position Cheeseburn as a top-quality art destination for the north of England.

Crystallised's audience research showed 51% of visitors were new and 49% were returning. Most visitors (73%) were aged over 45 and 96% of visitors travelled to Cheeseburn from within a 33-mile radius.

Further research identified the top communications channels through which audiences received information about Cheeseburn. Those were: Facebook (50% - with 64% of respondents saying they used social media more broadly); website (45%); leaflets (42%); word of mouth (39%); and the Cheeseburn e-newsletter (31%). Crystallised used this insight to develop tactics designed to reach its target audience.

Strategy, tactics, creativity and innovation:

Crystallised's strategy was to focus on the quality of art exhibitions at Cheeseburn to deepen engagement with existing visitors and attract new art lovers.

It developed a tactical campaign that made the most of Cheeseburn's limited budget and was mindful of the limitations of the venue. Tactics included:

1. Media relations:

Press releases, photocalls, preview visits and interviews with artists. Cultural leads at regional newspapers and magazines were targeted.

2. Events:

Pop-up exhibitions in Newcastle city centre (within the radius of existing visitors and matching the economic profile of visitors).

3. Community outreach:

Visits with gardening and arts groups to increase awareness among engaged groups aligned with Cheeseburn's offer.

4. Influencer relations:

Working with arts, culture and tourism bloggers.

5. Social media:

Focused on sharing art-led content to increase engagement and advocacy of existing visitors. Tactics included organic content and boosted posts and adverts.

6. Leaflets:

Distributed to art-focused venues in Northumberland and Newcastle to reach potential visitors.

7. Press advertising:

Adverts in the Hexham Courant (Hexham is a town close to Cheeseburn whose residents match the audience profile in age, affluence and interest in arts and culture).

8. Newsletters:

To existing visitors, universities and artists.

The creative approach focused on giving target audiences an insight into the creative process and highlighting the quality of the exhibitions. Professional images of the art in-situ were used in all tactics and interviews (both written and video) were deployed to give audiences a sense of connection with the artists.

Crystallised also introduced a number of ways for audiences to participate in the season to increase their support for Cheeseburn. This included a season-long photography competition and the chance to vote for the ten proposals for the Gillian Dickinson North East Young Sculptor of the Year prize.

Delivery:

July - September 2018:

Activity at this time focused on promoting each of the opening weekends of the 2018 season. This included media relations, social media activity, leaflet distribution, pop-up exhibitions and press advertising.

October 2018 - January 2019:

After the 2018 season closed, thorough audience evaluation was carried out to identify how visitors found out about Cheeseburn so that insight could be used to shape 2019's campaign. Crystallised also developed a tactical plan - including media relations, social media and newsletters - targeted at artists, academic institutions and galleries who might want to be involved in the 2019 season.

April - May 2019:

The full mix of tactics outlined above was deployed to attract visitors to the 2019 season. Including specific media feature articles on a prominent glass artist who is continuing a legacy for Sunderland's glass ships in glass bottles, and a young artist who has created an installation entirely from salvaged plastic which sprawls throughout the grounds.

Measurement and evaluation:

The campaign exceeded all of the campaign's objectives:

1. To increase annual visitor numbers by 10%

Visitors numbers increased by 17.5% between July 2018 and May 2019. May 2019 saw the highest number of visitors in one day since Cheeseburn opened, with 632 visitors on Sunday 19 May (equivalent to 108 people per hour).

2. To increase annual donations by 10%

Donations increased by 25% and charitable reserves increased by £22,500 year-on-year.

3. To raise awareness by securing at least three pieces of media coverage in regional titles per weekend (18 pieces in total)

19 pieces of regional media coverage were achieved, including a full-page editorial in The Journal's cultural supplement (the largest regional newspaper for the target audience), and 52% of visitors said they heard about Cheeseburn in the local press.

Overall, Crystallised generated 64 pieces of news coverage across 35 outlets with a total reach of 3.19 million.

Budget and campaign impact:

The budget for this campaign was £4,820, as follows:

- £4,000 campaign management and delivery
- £400 leaflet design and print
- £250 leaflet distribution
- £500 advertising in the Hexham Courant
- £120 in social media boosted posts and adverts.

The return on investment was significant. For every pound spent on the campaign, around £4 was added to Cheeseburn's charitable reserves and the cost per visitor was £1.02.