

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: Best Event

Company: W North

Entry title: The launch of Banyan Bar and Kitchen

Brief and objectives:

- To introduce the Banyan brand to a set of sophisticated drinkers and diners in Newcastle and the North East
- Produce a launch event to announce its arrival, attracting 500 relevant attendees to the launch party
- Develop a launch moment that would engage and leave a lasting impression on its target audience, ensuring repeat visits post-launch
- Deliver social amplification in the lead up to, during and immediately post launch.

The idea, research and planning:

With such a high profile and controversial location (Banyan took the place of the recently closed Jamie's Italian) under the shadow of Grey's Monument in Central Newcastle, the original idea was to turn the Monument into a distinctive 'upside down' Banyan tree rising 130ft into the Newcastle skyline.

Through our research and existing knowledge of the city we knew there were multiple audiences we needed to interact with ahead of and during launch, including local businesses, media, influencers and movers and shakers in the city. The idea was to develop a multi-layered launch culminating in a VIP launch night. Through a series of first look sessions, media and blogger hosting and the VIP launch we could bring Banyan to life and raise its profile amongst key stakeholders in the city.

Challenge No1: Nobody shared our ambitious vision. While the client was, admittedly, terrified of such a large scale and ambitious moment, they were keen to explore its validity. Sadly, officials and delivery partners wouldn't allow for this to happen. We had to switch plans.

If we couldn't construct a tree for the people, we would take trees to the people instead. A rejigged idea would form just one part of what would become a multi-layered pre-launch engagement programme. We'd identified that neighbouring businesses, especially those

with high numbers of employees were an untapped PR and communications target for this campaign.

Strategy, tactics, creativity and innovation:

Our plan was to maintain consistent communications with the target market in the lead up to launch. We would do this through:

- The creation of numerous, smaller showcase events for VIPs and early adopters
- First looks for local media and bloggers
- Create 'surprise and delight' moments in the lead up to launch across the city, driving amplification of launch night activity through encouragement of sharable social moments, including:
 - Without the ability to create a vast, 'show stopping' tree from Grey's Monument, we devised a plan to approach ten high volume employees in and around Newcastle, including the likes of Greggs HQ, Sage HQ and Brewin Dolphin
 - A 'quick response' Twitter team reacting to any central Newcastle businesses or individuals who engaged via the #BanyanTreats hashtag, delivering samples of Banyan's delicious Brownies.
- Deliver unforgettable launch night experiences for attendees, enhancing social amplification
- We staggered the timing on invites for differing sections, ensuring no overcrowding at peak times and no frustrating entry queues for attendees.

Delivery, including details of design, production and support teams employed:

Attractions for the launch night included:

- Music by Cue Music UK, a five piece 'mobile' band. Given the scale and size of the venue, we didn't want any congregation points or dedicated stages, so we sourced a live band who were able to play on the move, walking among the crowd across the two floors of the venue
- A live performance artist, who was dressed as a 9ft banyan tree, creating surprise and delight moments both inside and outside the venue (quite the sight when a nine foot tree starts dancing unannounced!)
- Personalised front door welcomes to all W invited guests
- 2 x Pop up gin bars from Tanqueray and Bombay Sapphire and a dedicated opening night cocktail list to remove any instances of overcrowding or long delays at the bar, improving attendees' overall experiences

- A prosecco shelf on arrival. A large hanging bookcase-style display that allowed arrivals to help themselves to a welcome drink
- Supplementary floral decoration.

Measurement and evaluation:

- 890 attendees, almost doubling the initial target of 500
- 31 influencers attended, contributing to more than 200 social media posts from the venue on the night of the launch
- 28 representatives from print, broadcast and online media titles in attendance at launch night
- 20 pieces of pre and post launch media coverage over a five week period
- 450 additional people in attendance over 9 x dedicated showcase food preview sittings
- The idea around the quick response Twitter team delivering brownies in central Newcastle generated more than 200 uses of the #BanyanTreats hashtag, peaking as a Newcastle upon Tyne top trending hashtag on March 7.

Budget and campaign impact:

Budget: £16,990 (Fees: £6,990, Campaign activations and production: £10,000).

Immediately after launch, the client requested additional retained structure be agreed. W North generated:

- An additional 13 articles during post launch period
- Almost 100 influencer reviews / social media posts post launch
- Client reports revenue predictions in excess of original targets for Q1.

Anni Opong, Managing director, Arc Inspirations: "It's rare for us to hire the services of a PR consultancy, however we knew we would need someone with an innate understanding of the city, an eye for creativity and an appetite for success that matches our own. We found all of that and more in W. They were instrumental in us making such a successful cut-through in a new city, proving immense value to our business at all levels. The team at W is incredibly professional and a pleasure to work with."