

Excellence Awards - 2021 Entry
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Entry ID: 9742

Third Party Authorization

Are you entering on behalf of, or in association with, any third party?: No

Basic Information

Category: 32. Small PR Consultancy of the Year

Entry Information

Entrant company name: Cowshed

Entry title:

Campaigns that work for causes we believe in.

Entry

Number of employees and annual fee income:

Number of employees: 20

Annual fee income:

- Year to June 2019: £853k (+138%)
- Year to June 2020: £985k (+15%)

Business objectives and analysis of performance against budget over the last two years:

In response to COVID-19 our plans for year to June 2021 focus on building resilience for our business and our people, so we are able to keep doing the work that matters to us, with the people we care about and for causes we believe in through 2021 and beyond.

Take care of the business:

- Grow turnover 5% YOY
- Grow client roster with minimum 10 new clients (five in health and education)
- Deliver 20% operating profit margin minimum
- Tighten up processes to achieve +10% reduction in operational costs
- Build expertise in team and develop our integrated offer

Take care of the team:

- Ensure wellbeing is our first consideration
- Ensure everybody has what they need to work from home
- Build mental health resilience through training and coaching

- All PR team members to gain CPD and get more Chartered Practitioners

Keep doing the right things:

- Join UN Global Compact's Ten Principles for Human Rights, Labour, Environment and Anti-Corruption
- Target Blueprint Ally status
- Become an official living wage employer
- Double applicants and places for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic internship programme
- Understand, monitor and control our impact on the environment

Our pragmatic and flexible approach to our strategy during the pandemic means we're on track for a projected fee income of £1.1m, an increase of 21% and operating margin of 22%.

A brief overview of business / team strategy:

We deliver campaigns that work for clients we love and causes we believe in. This commitment drives our strategy and holds us accountable to do the right thing and stand out from the crowd. We're committed to lead the reshaping of our industry in Wales and to position PR at the centre of its creative sector.

We lead the way in professional standards for our people and for our clients; each year we double down on our purpose driven approach, challenging ourselves to maximise the positive impact we can make for all our stakeholders.

A summary of commitment to CPD and professionalism:

Every member of the campaigns team (10 people) achieved CPD in 2020 and two became Chartered Practitioners.

We give our colleagues two hours back each week for wellness activities and professional development.

We fund training events and CPD memberships (CIPR, PRCA, Women in PR); £800 investment per person in professional development each year.

We're committed to being an outstanding employer. To support one another through the pandemic, we:

- Closed the office ahead of government guidelines
 - Developed a COVID-19 guide for team and clients
 - Met as a whole team virtually every morning
 - Invested £50k+ in ensuring everyone has the best possible WFH experience – kit, furniture etc.
 - Increased frequency of individual catch ups with focus on well-being and self-care e.g. promoting daily lunch walks, breaks etc.
 - Invested in mental health resilience training for the whole team
 - Made sure everyone had best possible Christmas through personalised gifts and extra time off
 - Listened hard. The opinion of our team matters; our lockdown survey showed 95% felt connected, rising to 100% in lockdown #3.
 - Gave our colleagues even more of a voice through our new taskforces: culture, wellbeing, diversity and inclusion
 - Invested in a confidential and independent employee assistant programme to help with work, family and personal life.
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A summary of recent outstanding achievements, including client list growth / retention:

Our #1 achievement is supporting each other through a pandemic. In this difficult climate, we've grown and diversified:

- £200K investment in growing our team including new departments (copy writing/digital) and department heads (digital and creative)
- 100% client retention
- 90% pitch win rate; 15 new clients in first three months of 2021 (four in health, three in education)
- Lead agency for Welsh Government's COVID-19 strategy. Keep Wales Safe and subsequent sector messages were developed by us and adopted across all departments within 24 hours. Keep Wales Safe is at the heart of the Welsh Government COVID-19 strategy to this day.

Our hard work has gained recognition.

- International place marketing award for our City of Arcades campaign
- Winners of PRCA UK's Best Internship programme; ran our 12-week paid Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic internship for a second year
- Business Insider's most exciting place to work in Wales
- 9th fastest growing company in Wales 2020

We're actively leading change.

- First creative agency in Wales to commit to UN Global Compact's Ten Principles for Human Rights, Labour, Environment and Anti-Corruption
- First agency in Wales to gain Blueprinted Ally status for commitment to diversity and inclusion
- Certified Autism Aware
- We've always been a living wage employer but this year we made it official
- Planted over 3000 trees for our new business wins
- Awarded Green Dragon status for our efforts to understand, monitor and control our impacts on the environment
- Gave more than £20k pro bono work to support issues affecting our community: Feed the Heath, Zero Racism Wales, Wales Council for Voluntary Action.

A summary of a campaign you are particularly proud of, including details of the brief, objectives, strategy, tactics, outputs, outcomes and budget:

Hospitality closures affected on-site cafes at hospitals. One Cardiff restaurant owner jumped into action and put his empty premises to good use to supply free, healthy meals to fuel NHS frontline workers. A true cause we believed in, Cowshed offered our comms support pro bono to help #FeedTheHeath.

Objectives

- Raise £25,000 donations to serve 100 meals a day over 12 weeks
- Recruit additional local businesses in Cardiff to volunteer for the campaign

Strategy and tactics

Organic media relations and social:

- Keep the media updated with key milestones such as donation figures, new businesses involved, and volume of meals made
- Newsjack good news features and covid response stories to put Feed the Heath at the forefront of community spirit and showcase the restaurants involved
- Keep the public donating and get more suppliers through a daily stream of meal updates, fundraising totals, and shout outs to local businesses on Twitter
- Raise the voice of independent retailers closed due to COVID-19 and dedicating their

time for free

- Ensure all output included GoFundMe link

Results and impact

- 83 pieces of coverage including UK national (Guardian, BBC News, Mirror) and international coverage with 804.6m OTS
- 3.6k shares of GoFundMe page
- £75.5k donations (+202% on target)
- 25 businesses providing meals
- 1,000 meals served each day (+900%)
- 68,000 meals and sweets served in total over 12 weeks (+709%)

Supporting Information

Additional supporting information (images, artwork, clippings and other media):

Provided

Campaign image (if entering individual/team awards, upload headshot/team photo here):

Provided

Company logo:

Provided

Please write a 30 word entry summary in the third person:

Cowshed creates campaigns that work for clients we love and causes we believe in. We are Wales' fastest growing integrated PR agency, with 20 consultants across campaigns, digital and creative.
