

Excellence Awards - 2021 Entry  
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Entry ID: 9216

### Third Party Authorization

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

### Basic Information

*Category:* 06. Public Affairs Campaign

### Entry Information

*Entrant company name:* Interel UK

*Entry title:*

APPG on Beauty, Aesthetics and Wellbeing: #notalaughingmatter

### Entry

*Brief, objectives and budget:*

Interel's objective was to secure the UK's beauty and wellness industry the recognition and support it deserved during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Throughout the pandemic, the UK's beauty and wellness industry has been one of the worst off with entire swathes the industry – salons, spas, and mobile workers – forced to close again and again with no access to cash flow. In Government's initial summer reopening plan, the industry was bottom of the list and left completely in the dark on when it could welcome back clients, with thousands of jobs and businesses on the line.

We had significant challenges to overcome. Firstly, given the pandemic, the whole campaign was organised remotely and almost exclusively took place virtually. Secondly, we faced the uphill battle of making political influencers and decision makers take seriously an industry that to date had been misunderstood, ignored, and side-lined as a 'pink and fluffy' women's industry.

*The idea, research and planning:*

We used the APPG on Beauty, Aesthetics and Wellbeing – set up by leading parliamentary campaigners Carolyn Harris MP and Judith Cummins MP, with Interel as Secretariat – as the united campaign body bringing together cross-party politicians and the multi-faceted, yet fragmented and sometimes divisive, industry.

We secured sponsorship from industry leading app-platforms Treatwell and Urban, plus the National Hair and Beauty Federation, Federation of Holistic Therapists, and Cosmetic, Toiletry and Perfumery Association, and corralled an advisory group of 30 leading businesses and industry bodies, to agree a call to action on Government to support the industry.

Working with the cross-industry group, we evidenced the £30bn contribution the hair and beauty industry makes to the UK each year, the 370,000 people it employs, predominantly women, and the role its 50,000 businesses play as the cornerstone of the UK's struggling high streets.

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*Strategy, creativity and innovation:*

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We built a 5-prong strategy:

1. Unite the multi-faceted, fragmented industry in one campaign,
2. Source compelling evidence proving the industry is an economic powerhouse,
3. Coalesce supporters around one #notalauhgingmatter campaign message,
4. Bring national attention to the campaign in Parliament and the media,
5. Mobilise grassroots industry and harness their social media presence.

Being a fast-moving and evolving situation, the team worked flexibly to evaluate and adapt the campaign as Government made unexpected announcements on when sections of the industry could reopen throughout the pandemic, and as they were locked down again with little notice. At each milestone we brought the APPG and cross-industry group together to agree the next objective, tactics, and secure the evidence base.

As the ramifications of the industry's extended closure became clear, we strengthened our campaign with evidence that 10% of salons had already gone under, while the mobile-working industry lost £8m per week while not working. We sourced eye-opening international comparisons from Treatwell, Europe's largest app-based booking platform, on the dire state of the UK's industry compared to elsewhere from leaving beauty behind.

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*Delivery/implementation of tactics:*

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Political momentum: The Co-Chairs wrote numerous letters to the Business Secretary, Cabinet Office, Chancellor and Prime Minister, which we gave as exclusives to national media. Our MP supporters challenged Government's lack of support for beauty and its male-led approach to the COVID recovery in 10+ Parliamentary debates. We secured support of the Women and Equalities Committee Chair and MPs coalesced around the APPG's #notalauhgingmatter campaign after MP William Wragg's exchange with the Prime Minister about the need to reopen beauty was met with loud laughter during PMQs.

Mobilising grassroots: Working closely with Treatwell, Urban, and the leading trade associations, we mobilised industry workers, created 'write to your MP' toolkits, and secured 400-500 signatures on two cross-industry letters to the Prime Minister. They tweeted their letters to create a campaign moment, tagging the Prime Minister and #notalauhgingmatter.

Media: We secured multiple op-eds from the Co-chairs and articles published in The Telegraph, The Times, The Sun, BBC, The Guardian, in local press, trade magazines,

and the Chairs conducted numerous Times Radio interviews. Twitter and Instagram were utilised as the central campaign platforms.

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*Measurement, evaluation and impact:*

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Our 10-month campaign achieved many successes as the Government gave into the campaign's demands and we set our sights on the next objective. Significantly, our campaigning has resulted in a momentous step-change in how the beauty industry is perceived by politicians and the highest levels of Government.

1. During the initial lockdown, our first success was securing forgotten sector representatives – mobile workers and spas – representation at BEIS meetings on reopening.
2. On announcing hairdressers could reopen after the first lockdown, the Prime Minister flippantly referred to the beauty sector as 'nail bars' and gave no clarity on reopening. We pushed on campaigning that the financial ruin of the industry was #notalaughingmatter and secured a U-turn as Government announced parts of beauty could follow suit.
3. Interel adapted the campaign as many in the industry were left behind as face treatments and spas remained off limits. Again we took this to the floor of the Commons, the press and social media to highlight that men could get face treatments under the guise they are barber treatments, calling out the Government's male-led approach to the COVID recovery. Within 10 days we secured another U-turn as it was announced that all close-contact treatments could restart.
4. Entering a second lockdown in November, we again faced the challenge of ensuring hair, beauty and wellness reopened from day one post-lockdown. Armed with the latest evidence on the impact on women, small/micro businesses, and BAME workers, and PHE data on low levels of industry transmission, we sent a letter to the Prime Minister co-signed by 500+ industry members. We immediately secured meetings with the Prime Minister's Office and most senior Cabinet Office Director in charge of COVID-19 restrictions. Days later it was announced that 'Personal Care' services could open in all Tiers across England, with the sector recognised in its own right separate from retail or hospitality.
5. In January 2021, following months of relentless campaigning, Government announced the formation of a new sector-specific team in BEIS, dedicated to the industry. Finally, in the roadmap out of lockdown, 'Personal Care' is one of the first to open in Step 2 in April.

## **Supporting Information**

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

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Provided

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*Company logo:*

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Provided

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

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Interel's hard-hitting multi-discipline #notalaughingmatter campaign resulted a wholesale turnaround in how the beauty industry is perceived by Government, securing it the recognition and support it deserved during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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