

Basic Information

Region (Check Region):

Midlands

Category:

28. In-House PR Team of the Year

Entry Information

Entrant company name:

Experian

Entry title:

Experian PR Team

Entry

Number of employees within the PR team and annual PR budget:

7-person in-house team with \$1.5 million budget.

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

1. Successfully launch Experian Boost into the market and generate strong consumer interest.
2. Position Experian as a key partner to consumers, businesses, and government during the pandemic – particularly in the early stages when critical support was most needed.

A brief overview of business / team strategy:

Demonstrating positive consumer and business outcomes sits at the heart of the team strategy. From March 2020 we pivoted to focus specifically on the good Experian could do during the pandemic, helping people with their finances in extraordinarily challenging circumstances, playing a key part in keeping the credit market moving, and playing a positive role in helping the economy navigate and recover from the shocks ahead.

Our focus has been on pushing the business to take real actions – for example supporting the Daily Mail's 'Laptop for Kids' campaign, and offering key products for free to support charities and small businesses during the pandemic – and helping them understand where Experian's data and expertise can make the most impact for everyone. Those stories were

then used to generate coverage across a broad range of media and creating a strong programme of owned channel content.

A summary of commitment to CPD and professionalism:

As a PR team, we have all agreed to follow a 'team charter' which provides a verbal contract with the wider business in terms of what service, goals and delivery looks like from an external comms perspective. This 'partnership' with the business determines how we work, and what we're here to do.

In order to fulfil this agreement, it's essential that everyone in the PR team remains committed to developing and enhance their abilities and expanding their expertise in the field. Goals are generally set at the beginning of the financial year and re-visited on a regular basis to track progress.

These goals are achieved through a mixture of formal and informal training, but importantly CPD professionalism is driven by the team member, so every approach differs from person to person.

A summary of recent outstanding achievements:

Over the year more than 320 articles in mainstream media included Experian's advice and role in the pandemic, including a byline from global CEO Brian Cassin in The Daily Telegraph and UK CDO Jonathan Westley in City AM. In-house experts worked in real-time to address questions on social media and via customer service.

In October the ICO issued an enforcement notice against Experian in relation to its marketing services business in the UK. The in-house team led the development of the narrative and all-audience communication (consumer, employee, client, media, stakeholder) and executed a coordinated response across the business. The result was a largely neutral external response with a tightly controlled internal and business message.

In November the team launched Experian Boost, a free service allowing people to improve their credit scores with data from services like Amazon Prime and Netflix, with standout results (further details below).

Seven Experian-led features ran in the Daily Mirror between April and August, covering scams, payment holidays, Corona-proofing your credit score, giving yourself a money MOT, and avoiding common credit mishaps.

A dozen broadcast interviews took place on the same topics, including You & Yours, Wake Up To Money, Money Box, On Your Behalf (all BBC) and LBC.

Experian's share of voice vs its key competitors was 65% for the year. The team secured a total of 8,700 positive articles (vs 7,700 the year before), managed 230 inbound enquiries (vs 170) and more than 100 direct consumer questions, positioning Experian as a consumer champion and source of advice in a year unlike any that had come before.

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

As mentioned above, the team launched Experian Boost in November. The strategy was threefold:

1. Use a problem/solution dynamic to highlight the issue (financial exclusion/lack of access to financial products) and then provide a solution (Experian Boost).
2. Tailor the story for our three priority audiences – consumers, lenders, and investors.
3. Harness influential voices to support the launch. It was critical that industry influencers like Martin Lewis were supportive of the launch of Boost.

Handling the unexpected: The ICO's enforcement notice, landing two weeks before launch, drew considerable inbound attention. We pivoted our approach to focus on personal finance and trade journalists to minimise crossover with the business and tech media who were leading the regulatory discussion. News headwinds were further increased by the announcement of a second national lockdown shortly before launch.

The launch: We conducted pre-briefings with the targeted list of influencers including Martin Lewis. Andrew Hagger from Moneycomms provided a quote for the press release while Jasmine Birtles praised Boost in a BBC interview.

A full-page exclusive with The Times officially launched the campaign, followed by a wide spread of national, broadcast, print, and online media and a day of radio interviews for Experian's spokespeople in partnership with Clare Seal, writer of Real-Life Money.

We also launched a colourful series of videos and short-form content across LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Experian's Global News Blog.

Results: The campaign played out successfully on every channel, from earned and owned media to social media and broadcast. The breadth of coverage was received well within Experian and delivered clear commercial benefits for the company. Most importantly, it genuinely helped consumers with their finances and delivered a "boost" for the nation at a time when this support was sorely needed.

- 370,000 consumer signups to Boost since launch
- Coverage in every national paper with more than 170 positive articles in total, generating direct inbound leads from several major lenders
- 5% share price "boost" in launch week
- 100% of articles included at least one key message, and only 5 publications referred back to the ICO enforcement notice
- 85% positivity in social coverage and extensive organic post and word-of-mouth lead gen. One such tweet created 520,000 impressions on Twitter alone, while leading money influencer Andy Webb spoke positively about Boost to his followers.

Supporting Information

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

Provided
