

Basic Information

Region (Check Region): North West

Category: 30. PR Consultancy of the Year

Entry Information

Entrant company name: No Brainer Agency

Entry title:

No Brainer Agency

Entry

Number of employees and annual fee income:

Employees as June 2021: 12

Total fees for June 2019 to June 2021: £1.63m

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

- In 2020 and 2021, we launched a rebrand, new website and company repositioning, which included investing in talent to drive our new SEO and insights service offer, ensuring it integrates seamlessly with our core digital PR, social and content marketing services.
- We focused on attracting and retaining the 'right' clients – helping to increase our average client retainer value (+6.5%) and drive stronger profitability
- We retained our profitability during Covid, and ended the 2021 year (May '21) at 18% Operating Profit (vs 15% target set pre-Covid)
- In June 2021, we also set out to recruit a new account director and two new account managers, which would take us to 15 people (from 8 people in June 2019 – an increase of 87.5%)

A brief overview of business / team strategy:

Despite the chaos of COVID, we've retained a team of 12 talented people, continue to work with 20+ clients including many household brands, and have seized the opportunity to expand our services.

When other agencies have contracted, we've chosen to invest; by expanding our SEO and insights offer and hiring a FTSE 250 SEO specialist to help us continue to drive our

business forward; and by focusing on client retention and winning new business.

A summary of commitment to CPD and professionalism:

Staff retention: preserving our team's wellbeing

We've had wellbeing high on our agenda for a number of years, with PR often being rated as one of the most stressful professions in the UK, but 2020 took that to a whole new level.

To help understand the challenges the team face, we conduct quarterly wellbeing surveys to find out what we can do to support them. Our range of activities included:

- All-agency training on wellbeing and productivity, which introduced us to strategies including energy mapping and time-blocking to ensure nobody felt overwhelmed
- Training on productivity skills to help whilst working from home
- A workshop with the Samaritans focused on emotional health and wellbeing, active listening skills, and how we can all support each other better.
- Twice-a-week team check-in's (no work-talk allowed), as well as a weekly No Brainer Radio session, which covers agency news and team shout-outs as well as Q&As and feel-good music.

Investment to demonstrate our value

The pandemic saw many organisations scale back budgets and marketing expenditure, which had a devastating effect on many agencies across the country.

As part of our Creative Intelligence® model we've always been passionate about measuring the value of what we do, which is why we committed ourselves to training and adopting internationally certified standards of measurement through AMEC.

Delivering on our purpose and values: diversity and inclusion

We work hard to deliver on our purpose, which is to 'create meaningful change'. The last year saw us launch 'Our commitment to diversity' and centres around four key pillars:

- Educating ourselves
- Championing diversity in our communities and our industry
- Building partnerships
- Providing opportunities

Examples of this in practice include educational activities focused on different ethnic groups and religious and cultural holidays; adapting our recruitment process and undergoing unconscious bias training; actively seeking and working with partners from diverse backgrounds; and working with the Taylor Bennett Foundation providing educational support and fundraising.

A summary of recent outstanding achievements, including client list growth / retention:

- We've generated 24 new clients over the period (a blend of retainers and projects, primarily retainers) and we also have £365k in new pipeline business and are due to announce 6 new clients imminently
- Despite the pandemic, during 2020 we managed to keep strong client retention (73% vs 75% target), whilst also increasing average retainer values by 6.5%
- We've enhanced our internal communications through quarterly business update

meetings, we launched 'No Brainer Radio', the brainchild of one of our account executives and hosted a series of activities to boost wellbeing, maintain our company culture and embed our values

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

No Brainer has been the retained PR agency for Levitex since 2018, tasked by the start-up pillow and mattress brand to launch its brand in the UK. Primarily through the use of digital PR and strong media relations, No Brainer's work has had a clear and direct impact on sales; supported the business to secure B2B retail partnerships and helped establish the brand as a supplier to the NHS, playing an important role in the fight against COVID in the North West.

Through a range of pro-active media relations activity, thought leadership placements and link building and outreach, No Brainer achieved the following:

Outputs

- 45 individual digital media placements placed between June 2019 – May 2021: including The Guardian, The Independent, Mail Online, Metro, British GQ, Woman & Home, Men's Fitness, and Daily Star
- National and regional placements: 25
- Trade placements: 20
- Opportunities to See (OTS): 50,000,000
- Key message penetration: 80%+
- Sentiment: 100% positive
- Direct links earned through digital PR: 24
- Average domain authority: 70

Outtakes

- Increase in web traffic of 1,313% YOY (June 2019 – March 2021 vs. Jan 2019 – March 2020).
- 751% increase in direct traffic to the site
- 676% increase in organic traffic to the site
- Top site refers include: The Guardian, Men's Fitness, Metro, Mail Online and LinkedIn with followed links
- x4 enquiries/conversations with leading retailers including Dreams, Next, Ideal Shopping and House of Fraser
- x2 converted partnerships with Dreams and Next
- Featured as an Indy Best Buy 2021

Outcomes

- B2C: As a result of well-placed media coverage and a focus on digital PR and link earning, No Brainer has contributed £25,000+ in revenue between June 2019 – May 2021. Other results include:
 - B2B: Commercial deals signed with Dreams and Next - Activation of strong brand awareness across both relevant media and LinkedIn activation has meant that Levitex was approached by leading bed manufacturer, Dreams, and has now signed a deal to supply its pillows across Dreams stores. Next has also agreed a deal to stock Levitex pillows.
 - Healthcare: An intervention in the NHS normally takes up to 20 years but through our proactive approach, Royal Preston Hospital (one of the hospitals to receive the Levitex

pillows donation) is now using a bespoke 'proning system' created by James and his team using Levitex foam, helping coronavirus patients to lie in the prone position.

Supporting Information

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

Provided
