BIRMINGHAM
City University

The admissions challenge

How to protect and use your institution's reputation to increase recruitment

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“Reputation still king”

University choice

- Future Leaders 2007/08 – over 40% say reputation of course and university/college is “very important”
- Higher Expectations Survey 2008/09 – a third feel university reputation is “very important”
- British Council 2009 student decision-making survey – top 3 factors for selecting an institution are quality of course, career prospects and reputation

League tables

- US News annual rankings launched 1983
- October 1992 saw launch of UK league tables
- Two global university rankings – Tiao Jong (2003) and THE (2004)
- National Student Survey (2005) and Green League (2008)
- Desire for ‘measured accountability’ and the ‘marketisation’ of higher education

Source: The Knowledge Partnership, Wikipedia

Birmingham City

Background

- One of the largest UK universities – 23,000 students and 2,500 staff
- Roots date back to 1843 and founding Birmingham Government School of Design
- Mergers with colleges, most recent Birmingham School of Acting (2005)
- Birmingham Polytechnic 1971
- University of Central England 1992
- Birmingham City University (Oct 2007)

Margaret Street

Ambition

New Vice-Chancellor 2007

- Changed name – city locator, pride in region
- Recognised regionally, nationally, internationally
- An ‘exemplar’ for engagement with employers, the professions and the community
- Providing an educational experience of the highest quality
- Increase income targets
- Multi-million estate development – new city centre campus

Where were we

2008 – the UCE legacy

- Declining UCAS applications
- HEFCE ‘claw-back’ in 2007
- Predicting 1,000 shortfall in 2008
- Major lack of awareness
- Reputation poor – “place of last resort”, “second best”
- Attracts “average”, “local”, “down-to-earth” students, “people who aren’t bright” and “rejects”.

Improving reputation

Tactics

- Consciously improve league table positioning
- Lobby key stakeholders/people of influence
- Define your brand position, key messages
- Launch a marketing and PR campaign to inform and educate new and existing audiences
- Develop internal communications to build pride within the institution – staff as ambassadors
- Engage with alumni – word of mouth referral

What did we did

‘Evidence-based’ brand position

- Innovative teaching, excel in practical application of knowledge
- Credibility of partnerships with industry
- A ‘rising star’ for research
- Institutional pedigree and portfolio – track record since 1843, unique offering in the Arts through Conservatoire, Academy of Writing, BSA, BIAD
- Achievements of students, alumni, staff, businesses

Discovering us is just the beginning…

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Discovering us is just the beginning...

What did we did

The ‘Big Bang’ 2008

- National and regional TV via E4 and Central
- National and regional press
- Regional radio, outdoor advertising
- Targeted PR
- Highlight our quality, pedigree:
  Launching careers since 1843
  Ahead of the times then & now

What happened

Results

- Home FT UG up **795** on 2007
- Visitors to Clearing Open Days up by **10%**
- **38%** of public saw TV adverts
- Pre-campaign, 20% rated their opinion of the university as 1-2 (out of 5) – rose to **30%**
- **28%** ranked us in the top 10

Winner, Outstanding Recruitment Campaign
THE Leadership & Management Awards 2009

What's happened since?

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The 'Big Bang' 2009

- New 'Discovering us' ad on national and regional TV via E4 and Central
- Internal communications
- Alumni engagement

.Did you *know?*

Latest results

Clearing 2009

- Highest increase in 2009 UCAS applications in the UK – **38%** against national 9.7%
- Clearing telephone traffic and Open Day visitors doubled, Clearing home page had 4,981 hits on results day compared with 1,975 year before
- FT PG numbers up 33%
- National coverage on Channel 4, Sky news, ITV, BBC Radio 2, Guardian, Times, Independent, Times Higher
- October Open Days attendance up 52%