The Adolescent & Children's Trust (TACT)

Participation: Utilising existing foster carers for word of mouth referrals

Andy Pallas, Partnership and Contracts Manager

Brighter futures for children and young people

The Adolescent and Children's Trust

What TACT Foster Carers said

41% found out about TACT through word of mouth

96% would recommend TACT to other interested in fostering

TACT Foster Carers Survey (2011)

Word of Mouth Advertising

"An unpaid form of promotion in which satisfied customers tell other people how much they like a business, product or service"

"WOM exists because it is impossible for consumers to know everything about everything"

➘ Why is WOM so powerful?

- Independent, honest and reputational
- Indirect experience about product/service through the experience of friends and relatives
- Tailored to people who are interested in it
- Self generating
- Not limited by money/physical restraints
- The Internet

Research

- 60% of consumers purchased products solely through personal recommendation (Mercier Gray)
- Recommendations made by people customers know carry twice the weight as advertising (General Electric)
- Receiver's decision is influenced strongly by information obtained from a strong tie (Johnson-Brown & Reingen, 1987)
- People normally share opinions about products/services with 5/6 people if they are satisfied when dissatisfied they can inform up to 11 people (Cafferky, 1996)

➘ Why WOM and Fostering?

- Friends and relatives still the #1 source of information
- Foster carers have experience and can provide assurance 'live and in action'
- 'Personal' product/service (Maritz, 1995)
- High degree of emotional involvement
- Complex and difficult to evaluate
- Cost effective method of advertising

➘ How to develop WOM?

- It won't just happen!
- Quality of customer service
- Be positive
- Talk to Foster Carers
- Incentive programmes
- Promotional materials
- Develop website