

PUBLIC SECTOR

Client:

Business Link Leicestershire

Campaign:

Business Women's Link network for Leicestershire

Brief:

Devise a communications strategy to secure involvement in the development of a business support network for existing and potential women entrepreneurs particularly in hard-to-reach groups.

Solution:

We expected to implement a network similar to those we had created elsewhere, but first local need and support had to be measured.

A media relations campaign was identified as a vital route to secure the involvement of the target audience as many women in business are not part of existing networks and infrastructure so the dissemination of strong messages in the media was crucial. We produced and placed feature articles featuring case studies about local women in business to attract attention in the campaign, using both business and women's feature pages.

Quantitative research was needed to inform developments for the network and the media campaign was used to make a direct invitation for engagement in the process. We also built a strong communication platform through focus groups and direct contact to develop relationships with partners, particularly minority ethnic groups such as the Afro-Caribbean Business Association, the Asian Business Association and to secure the involvement of other membership groups such as the Chamber of Commerce.

Photography featuring members of the network was a particularly important aspect of the campaign to emphasise the breadth of ethnic backgrounds involved and a key device to attract further involvement amongst those groups.

Once research had evidenced the need and shape for a network, the campaign culminated in a high-profile launch event in which we involved a number of inspirational and high profile women – including Patricia Hewitt, the then Trade and Industry Secretary and Minister for Women and a local MP for Leicester, together with other significant role models to raise the aspirations of members and secure media coverage.

Results:

- Achieved more than double the target of 100 research responses with 202 returned
- Far exceeded the 75 attendees target for the launch event - with 105 bookings and additional on the door attendees
- Extensive coverage achieved in all the target media with key messages on target across regional dailies, county weeklies, regional radio, regional business magazines and partner newsletters
- Development of an award winning project

