

Passionate People. Passionate Places

The 'Passionate people. Passionate places' regional image campaign began in 2005, promoting the region as a great place to live, work, relocate, visit and study. An investment of £15 million was made over an initial three year period with the key objectives of changing perceptions of the region; inspiring confidence among residents and businesses and ensuring the region could compete in national and international markets.

The project began with large-scale market research in local, national and international markets and identified that 76% of people nationally had very little knowledge of North East England. Those who did know the region, helped to define our key strengths identifying them as: History and Heritage, Coast and Countryside, City Culture and People and these strengths became the main campaign themes, core to all marketing campaigns.

After a brand development process, the Passionate People. Passionate Places campaign was born and launched in May 2005. Brand Guidelines.¹

The campaign consisted of:

- National press advertising:
 - Sustained campaign
 - 50 placements in national press
 - 18,485,000 adults reached
 - 99,000,000 opportunities to see
- London Underground
- Taxis
- East Coast Mainline
- Rail and in-flight magazines
- Major event branding
- Brand toolkit

Through a regional media alliance, all the media of the North East got on board, helping to spread the word in region and aiming to develop passionate advocates out of their readers and listeners. Local media branded their mastheads with the Passionate People branding, vans were given dedicated Passionate livery, stories were written and the media gave enormous support, seeing the real benefit of promoting the region and developing local pride.

Tourism Marketing and Regional Image campaign

Tourism was an important part of the Regional Image campaign and shared the campaign themes with the objectives of attracting more domestic and overseas tourists to the region; increasing visitors' average spend; increasing visits throughout the year, not solely in the main holiday season and to grow the distribution of tourism across the region.

¹ Passionate Guidelines

At the start of 2006, the tourism campaign was launched including:

- 10 million national press inserts
- 2006 Holiday Guide
- Autumn/Winter Special Offer Campaign
- Cycling Campaign
- International Campaigns in Germany, Holland, Norway, Ireland and Italy
- The Region's first walking campaign was launched with 85,000 walking guides produced
- The first North East England TV commercial was produced - launched to 7.4 million people during Emmerdale providing over 1,000 further opportunities to see the one minute, 40 and 30 second versions.
- An award winning attractions campaign was launched
- The Gardens campaign was launched at the Chelsea Flower Show

Successes

Over the first three years, the impact of the 'Passionate people. Passionate places' campaign was considerable. The campaign won 'World's Best Regional Marketing Campaign' at World Travel Awards 2005 and there were excellent changes in perception nationally with research showing that over 55% percent of people who have seen the advertising willing to speak highly of the region. Local people were also far more likely to speak positively about the region with 80% of local people who saw the campaign, now saying they would act as advocates for the region.

But there was still work to be done, the aim of the campaign was to change deep rooted opinions that people had built up over many decades and it was always clear that a long term approach to promoting consistent positive stories about the region had to be taken to build on the very low base of awareness of North East England and our strengths.

Awards

2005 World's Best Regional Marketing Campaign, World Travel Awards
2006 World's Best Regional Marketing Campaign, World Travel Awards
2007 Best Integrated PR Campaign, CIPR Pride Awards
2008 Top 30 Destination in Lonely Planet Guide

Regional Image Campaign: Business and Innovation

Whilst the early stages of the Regional Image Campaign very much focussed on the region's strengths as a tourism destination, the 'Passionate people. Passionate places' campaign had always been about promoting North East England as more than just a holiday destination. It was always believed that by challenging perceptions of the region, the campaign could break down barriers to investment, relocation and recruitment. Outdated perceptions of the North East have adversely affected the region's ability to attract

investment and talent to the area in the past with the Regional Economic Strategy identifying the image of the region as one of the barriers to economic growth. By having a positive influence on the whole region, the campaign played a significant role in the economic development of the North East.

The second phase of the Regional Image Campaign therefore focused on promoting the region's Business and innovation message and activity focused on the theme of business and innovation positioning the region as a location of choice to work, build a career, establish a business, relocate and invest.

Adverts featuring high profile figures from the region's businesses had always played a part in the campaign to help raise awareness of our industrial strengths but the second phase took this one step further – with a series of adverts involving some of the region's international firms.

In particular, the campaign looked at how we could help address skills issues by supporting talent attraction, particularly healthcare and life sciences, advanced manufacturing and automotive, energy and low carbon technology, digital media and animation and chemicals.

In 2008, therefore the Regional Image Campaign changed focus. The Regional Image Campaign: Business and Innovation launched in September 2008 with a programme of high profile national advertising with titles including Daily Telegraph and the Economist and National Media Partnerships with the FT. Supplementing this activity within the region was the ambassadors programme which aimed to build on the strengths of the Passionate people. Passionate places brand and encourage more regional businesses to act as advocates.

Objectives

- North East England is recognised regionally, nationally and internationally as a dynamic business location
- The region becomes synonymous with excellence and innovation in the key sectors
- To create awareness of North East England as an excellent place to live, work, invest and do business

In 2009, however, the economy ran into difficult times and a decision was made to shift away from national activity and place a focus on niche, sector specific activity. The campaign focussed on a range of sectors including: chemicals/process, engineering/automotive, energy, life sciences. This interim period was used to conduct national **Marketwise** research² to help better understand the key areas of North East strengths, helping to define the key

² North East England Marketwise Synopsis 2010

messages and ensuring the region was positioning ourselves as a credible player in key markets. These sectors were very specific and this research helped us to develop very targeted messaging that would stand up within the specialist press we were targeting.

The key findings of the study showed there was a real opportunity to position North East England as a knowledge based economy that included significant R&D with commercialisation and manufacturing. Key messages:

- **Ultra-low carbon vehicles** – track record, Nissan battery plant, test track, Sevcon, National skills academy, supply chain
- **Offshore wind**– track record, NAREC, deep water ports, R&D and manufacturing skills, supply chain, sites available for manufacture
- **Life sciences** – world leading centre in ageing and health and stem cells research, R&D commercialisation through strong health sector partnerships and support structures
- **Process/chemicals** – major centre for all process industries. Opportunities for commercial exploitation in low carbon and sustainable technology and industrial biotech
- **Plastic electronics** – unique environment in UK to undertake R&D and commercialisation into emerging global sector
- **Digital** – world-class gaming sector, linkages to other key areas, strong support structures and venture capital environment, fastest rate of technology start-ups outside of London.

Media Plan

In February 2010, the region relaunched its National campaign including:

- National titles – Adverts within the Economist, Daily Telegraph, Times and National Geographic
- Niche titles – Both adverts and advertorials within each of the key sectors: Automotive, Renewable Energy, Chemicals, Engineering, Plastic Electronics, Digital.
- Online activity – Banner advertising, podcast branding, Pre roll videos.
- PR – within niche sectors
- Increased Ambassador focus
- Enhanced website www.northeastengland.co.uk incorporating sub-sites of Investment, Living and Working and Ambassadors as well as our tourism site.

Ambassadors

One of the great achievements of the campaign was the support gained from within the region from businesses and organisations of all sizes got behind the

campaign and shouted proudly about the region's strengths. At the start of the campaign it was recognised that if we wanted to compete with other areas around the world that had been promoting themselves for much longer we would need to think cleverly about how we made our message reach further.

Talented and enthusiastic people from North East England have always featured strongly in the advertising campaigns and over 1000 businesses and organisations came forward who were committed to promoting the strengths of North East England. Hundreds of companies used the North East England logo and 'Passionate' branding in their marketing. Others are simply talking passionately about the region and reinforcing the campaign whenever they can.

The regional image campaign was always about empowering people to act as advocates for the region. The new business ambassador programme aimed to harness the collective pride and passion of these campaign supporters and help them spread positive messages about the region that will help us reach more people through the campaign and with a more credible message.

During the business stage of the campaign we provided more ways for businesses and individuals to get involved, in response to the feedback we received from existing supporters. They wanted to play their part – and therefore the enhanced ambassadors programme gave them the chance to do this. The new Ambassadors website provided businesses with practical tools for them to use to promote the region – a toolkit with resources such as recruitment brochures, maps and images of the region as well as PowerPoint templates featuring key facts about North East England was produced and used widely.

Many companies and organisations are proud to promote the region recognising the links between the positive image of North East England and the region's future prosperity.

Useful Background Documents

Market Research

Mori Fighting Brands Research Project 2004³

Mori Perceptions of the North East of England January 2005⁴

Synopsis of Mori Perceptions of the North East of England January 2005 used for initial tender exercise⁵

Bluegrass Perceptions Research 2008⁶

North East England Marketwise Research Synopsis 2010⁷

³ MORI presentation - fighting brands

⁴ mori RIS report

⁵ RIS OJEC MORI info

⁶ Blue Grass Perceptions research 2008

⁷ North East England Marketwise Synopsis 2010

Presentations

Regional Image Campaign – The Beginning ⁸

Regional Image Campaign – Business & Innovation Campaign ⁹

Ambassadors Campaign ¹⁰

Brand Guidelines ¹¹

Useful Brochures

Ambassadors Brochure ¹²

RIS Strategy ¹³

Top Facts and Figures – Key Business Sectors ¹² ¹⁴

⁸ Regional Image Campaign The Beginning

⁹ Regional Image Campaign Business and Innovation

¹⁰ Ambassadors

¹¹ Passionate Guidelines

¹² Ambassador Brochure A4

¹³ -RIS Strategy full

¹⁴ Top facts and figures key business sectors

References

1.	Passionate Guidelines
2.	North East England Marketwise Synopsis 2010
3.	MORI presentation - fighting brands
4.	MORI RIS report
5.	RIS OJEC MORI info
6.	Blue Grass Perceptions research 2008
7.	North East England Marketwise Synopsis 2010
8.	Regional Image Campaign The Beginning
9.	Regional Image Campaign Business and Innovation
10.	Ambassadors
11.	Passionate Guidelines
12.	Ambassador Brochure A4
13.	RIS Strategy full
14.	Top facts and figures key business sectors