

Partnership & Collaboration

Lough Neagh
Fishermen's
Co-operative



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#EelsAreTasty

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Lough Neagh Partnership

Background



- Largest wild eel fishery in Europe (400 tonnes annually)
- Ancient fishing tradition
- Awarded PGI status in 2011
- The eel industry plays a significant role in the local rural economy (seasonal employment for > 250 fishermen)

Background



- Eels shipped (live) by air freight to Netherlands & London
- Only a few key buyers
- Quality of EU farmed eels a concern
- Strategic objective of the co-op to develop other markets
- Ambitious development plans – new processing facilities, visitor centre

Objectives



- To build brand awareness
- To develop a market within NI for Lough Neagh Eels
- To launch a signature food festival for Lough Neagh
- Develop an EU Food Project for Lough Neagh

The Plan



Creative Marketing!

1. To inspire visitors to attend this unique 1 day festival – target 500
2. To encourage NI chefs to serve Lough Neagh Eels
3. To educate & create brand ambassadors to improve perceptions of LN eels

The Challenge

It was an open day at a fish factory!

The marketing budget was
£1,500



Tactics

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Lack of funding to deliver ‘above the line’ campaign required the creation of an agile & focused marketing plan

- Utilised ***existing destination marketing channels*** – website, social media & email
- ***Clever media pitch*** to generate PR (Willy Wonka’s Chocolate factory of Toome)
- ***Collaboration & engagement***: utilised the reach of other intermediaries/ key influencers – media, tourism industry & brand partners to extend ***key messages***
- Creation of ***brand ambassadors/advocates*** (using social media in particular)
- ***Integration*** of communication across marketing channels (traditional & digital)
- ***Focus on digital*** (content marketing)

Collaboration & Partnerships

Trade

- Fishermen
- MLAs & MPs
- Chefs/restaurants
- Councils
- Sponsors
- Heritage boat builders

Consumers

- Media / Food-writers/bloggers
- Food Tours
- Schools
- Tourism NI
- Food NI
- What's on NI

Festival Achievements



Blew all KPI's out of the water:

- 2,865 attendees (sold all eel stock in first hour)
- Like for like sales up 26%
- Campaign reach phenomenal – AVE £80,000 – no investment
- Successful engagement with Chefs – more menus featuring eels
- CIM, Ireland, Marketing Excellence Award – Marketing with Impact 2014 & 2015

*You don't
need a big
budget for
big impact*

What we learned:

- Integrated marketing communications, key influencers, partnerships & collaboration – key!
- Survey Monkey feedback: demand for pop up restaurant, exhibition & annual event
- People want to learn about the ancient cultural traditions associated with eel fishing
- Agile marketing is key success factor – monitor real-time insights & adapt

The Future



- Growing interest in Eels, bigger festival budget, sponsorships
- Relocation to new public site for 2016 (Antrim Castle Gardens)
- Pilot 'Eel-Ate' (Lough Neagh Restaurant Week) – hugely significant for restaurant industry in NI
- Development of EU Food Project for Lough Neagh

Who's coming 2nd July?

- Food Theatre
- Food Market, Street Food & Local Crafts
- Heritage Exhibition, fishermen story-telling & line demonstrations
- Pop-Up Restaurant
- Foraging & garden tours
- Cookery School with Paula McIntyre
- Live Entertainment & Children's Activities



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