



Manchester Salford Housing Renewal Pathfinder

developing a marketing and communications strategy



Introduction

The Manchester Salford Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder (MSP) is an opportunity to transform perceptions of the region through regeneration, interventions in the housing market, environmental renewal and through community and stakeholder involvement.

It includes a health, education, training and economic agenda and will require a holistic approach with all agencies working together across departmental and local authority boundaries. It is crucial to the success of the programme that the MSP raises its profile nationally, regionally and locally. In order to achieve this, a robust, targeted and effective marketing and communications strategy needs to be implemented.

In this expression of interest, IPB Communications will demonstrate that we have the experience, skills and knowledge to undertake the brief's key development areas of:

- Identifying key stakeholders and creating bespoke messages
- Gaining national, regional and local media coverage
- Political lobbying
- Delivering coherent messages through marketing, media relations, public relations, internal communications and crises and issues management
- Interfacing an umbrella strategy with existing branding and marketing initiatives.

Experience – understanding communities and key stakeholders

Non-executive Chairman Tony Struthers OBE and Managing Director Tony Ingham were instrumental in developing and executing the public relations campaign for The Lowry. As well as planning the communications strategy for the landmark project they were also at the forefront of the lobbying campaign aimed at MPs, MEPs, and English Partnerships, as well as the three main Lottery funding bodies.

The key messages to the various audiences were carefully managed. To local influencers, The Lowry was the catalyst for the regeneration of Salford Quays; to the marketing and arts fraternity, this was a world class arts facility; to local people, it was about creating jobs and raising aspirations. To the wider Salford and Manchester audiences, The Lowry was a landmark Millennium Project which would instil a greater sense of civic pride across the region.

Following the success of The Lowry, Tony Ingham then went on to work on projects which include The Imperial War Museum – North, Manchester's Commonwealth Games bid and The Lowry Designer Outlet Mall – all of which demanded an appreciation of, and an effective working relationship with, other stakeholders and partners' specific aspirations and objectives. These included English Partnerships, Peel Holdings, Orbit Developments, Trafford, Salford and Manchester Councils, Marketing Manchester and Trafford Park Development Corporation.

IPB Directors Catherine Bellis and Stewart Pimbley worked on the Seedley and Langworthy SRB Regeneration Consultation and have gained an in-depth understanding of housing renewal, demolition and planning-for-real issues. IPB is the market leader in advising on public consultation in the social housing sector. We have developed award winning campaigns which address and support the Government's Sustainable Communities Plan. We have worked for over 40 local authorities on their Housing Transfer, Arm's Length Management and Housing Options strategies. We are regularly asked to present at seminars run by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Experience – the media and marketing

With the exception of Steve Fox (who has a degree in Economics and is a Corporate Member of the Chartered Institute of Housing) senior members of the IPB team have media backgrounds and include: the former programme controller of Piccadilly Radio (now Key 103), a former local newspaper editor, a former local government correspondent and three former journalists, with regional and national experience.

We understand how the media works and have an excellent track record in gaining wide-spread coverage in local, regional and national newspapers as well as specialist and trade publications.

We are regularly commissioned to undertake communications audits for local authorities and housing associations. We understand the sensitivities required in finding agreement among "partner" agencies and organisations who often perceive each other as rivals, in particular for media attention.

Following Manchester's two Olympic Games bids, Tony Ingham, as a member of Staniforth PR, was the lead PR consultant in the creation of Marketing Manchester. This was formed initially by Greater Manchester Development Corporation, Manchester City Council, Manchester Airport, the Greater Manchester Transport Executive and Arts About Manchester which shared a vision for the way in which Manchester had to position itself as a major European destination.

The challenge was to find the common ground which the key partners shared and develop a brand which they each felt added value to their individual marketing initiatives and objectives.

Our approach to the MSP brief

The MSP is a confusing concept, not only to the local and regional media but to individuals and organisations one would think would have a grasp of its remit and significance.

During our albeit limited research we discovered low levels of awareness or understanding amongst journalists and press officers (they all know it's a good thing...they just can't explain how it works and who is running it).

The key issues

In developing the marketing and communications strategy to raise the profile of the project, a great deal of sensitivity will be required. There are dozens of projects (all at different stages in terms of delivering results) which are contributing to the regional 'bigger picture' as well as:

- The historic rivalry between Manchester and Salford
- The Central Salford Initiative and East Manchester are both high profile initiatives with their individual marketing objectives
- Quangos such as the North West Regional Development Agency, which have to fight for column inches to promote their role in improving the economic well being of the region
- The understandable 'parochial' attitude of some communities and stakeholders who are working, mostly voluntarily, on local community initiatives and don't want to be "taken over"
- The anger and confusion over the cancellation of the next phase of the Metrolink

We would approach the project in distinct stages:

1 Understanding the objectives of MSP: The purpose of a communications and marketing strategy is to support the attainment of key business objectives. We would propose meeting with Board members to fully understand their aims and objectives. We will also undertake an audit of existing marketing and communication tools. At the same time we would use our contacts at the ODPM and identify how the Department will be judging the merits of the Pathfinder in terms of profile and awareness. Only then will we have a clear understanding of what needs to be achieved.

Timescale 6th Oct – 10th Oct No. of days 3 Cost £1920

2 Testing current levels of awareness: Once our key audiences have been identified, journalists, press officers, marketing executives, PR agencies etc, we would test their level of awareness and understanding of MSP by means of a telephone survey. This will give us a benchmark against which to measure progress.

Timescale 6th Oct – 14th Oct No. of days 4 Cost £2560

3 Identifying MSP's partners: Critical to the success of the project will be our work with key partners and encouraging them to take ownership of the future marketing and communications strategy and not to feel threatened by it. Once they have been identified, we would propose holding a day long 'Partnering Day' run by an independent facilitator.

During the event, key players would explain the current status of their own marketing initiatives and explore ways in which MSP's marketing strategy could add value to them. The objective of the 'Partnering Day' would be to gain agreement on the need for an 'umbrella' strategy and draw-up broad objectives.

Timescale 10th Oct – 6th Nov No. of days 8 Cost £5120
Plus cost of holding "Partnering Day" Cost £3500

4 An interim report: IPB would recommend that an interim report and proposal is then brought before the MSP Board for consideration. If agreed the report would then be shared with key partners for observation and comment.

Timescale 7th Nov – 22nd Nov No. of days 5 Cost £3200

5 The final draft: A detailed, costed and timed marketing and communications proposal would be produced, it would demonstrate the need for a marketing and communications strategy for MSP which would 'cut through the noise' created by the myriad of activities and initiatives. It would position the MSP as a project which is succeeding and once again reflecting the 'can do' attitude of the region, and most importantly, one which deserves further support and funding.

Timescale 22nd Nov – 12 Dec No. of days 3 Cost £1920

Total Cost £18,220

IPB Communications charges an hourly rate of £80 (£640 per day). Our daily rate includes all travel and sustenance, all phones, faxes and courier costs. The above figures do not include VAT.