

Learn from Oxfordshire County Council

Attracting older workers to work in social care - media campaign

Oxfordshire County Council worked with Oxfordshire Association of Care Providers in 2015-16 on a campaign to attract people to work in social care, specifically targeting those over the age of 50.

Background

Oxfordshire County Council predicted that the social care workforce needed to grow by up to 750 workers each year to meet demand for social care services. They also faced issues with retaining staff in a sector with 29% staff turnover each year. This posed major challenges in terms of workforce capacity and capability in the sector.

To meet these challenges the council analysed population data and identified that the population aged 50+ is growing at an exponential rate, and are potentially a good 'fit' to work in the social care sector.

What they did

The council worked with Oxfordshire Association of Care Providers to develop a campaign to promote careers in social care to people over the age of 50 in Oxfordshire. All communications directed respondents to the Oxfordshire Association of Care Providers website where they could find social care vacancies in the area.

£25,000 was spent on the following activities:

- attendance at job fairs and careers events
- out of home advertising including 6 sheets ads (phone boxes and bus stops), bus advertising and 48 roadside billboards
- social media promotion including Facebook advertising to 18-25 and 45-65 year old females in Oxfordshire and free Facebook and Twitter posts
- personalised e-mails to 12,049 45-60 year olds in Oxfordshire and to 6000 people via reed.com. They also targeted recipients of the e-mails with Facebook advertising
- printed adverts in Families Oxfordshire magazine.

The content of the promotions was targeted to the audience.

- As 85% of people who work in social care are female, the promotions featured images and quotes from women who already worked in the sector.
- The advertising and social media focused on the unique rewards that a job in social care can bring, and the positive impacts that social care workers have on the lives of the people they support.
- The personalised eshot prompted individuals to consider whether they had what it takes to work in social care, and focused on their values, behaviours and skills.



What they achieved

Oxfordshire County Council found it difficult to assess the impact of the campaign, but data relating to the digital activities suggested that the eshot campaign reached more people than similar government led campaigns with higher click to open rates.

What they learnt

Putting a human face on the campaign worked well. One of the care workers featured in the advertising was asked to speak to an audience of care providers. She argued that it's not possible to provide good quality care and support to people, if employers don't also care for their workers who provide the support. Oxfordshire County Council commented that 'her words were more powerful than anything [they] could have scripted'.

Using digital communications enabled them to reach a wider range of people that more conventional campaigns couldn't.

Unfortunately the landing web page for people who followed the links from adverts and emails was not fully developed in time for the campaign. Whilst the web page did contain live vacancies, it would have been more useful to also provide general information about the different career opportunities in the sector.



Top tips

- Work with data and intelligence colleagues to learn more about your local population, how it's changing and which demographic groups might be good prospects to work in social care.
- Develop a campaign that speaks directly to your target audience. Consider the factors that might positively influence or concern them and reflect this in your campaign.
- Go digital - buy a billboard and then tweet to your hearts content. Out of home media is costly but Twitter is free!

For more information

Visit www.oxfordshire.gov.uk

Contact

Rachel Lawrence, Commercial manager
Rachel.lawrence@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Shaun Bennett, Commercial and market development manager
Shaun.bennett@oxfordshire.gov.uk