

Higher Apprenticeships Support Service

Case study: Developing a marketing campaign for Higher Apprenticeships – SusCon@North West Kent (NWK) College

SusCon is a sustainable construction training centre set up and managed by North West Kent College in Dartford, Kent. It provides a wide range of sustainability training both for the community and the construction industry from entry to level seven CPD units. The centre was built as an exemplar and was awarded Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) 'outstanding' ratings, following design stage and final stage assessments. (BREEAM is the world's leading design and assessment method for sustainable building). North West Kent College were awarded a contract by the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) to develop a Level four Higher Apprenticeship in Sustainable Building.

A series of taster sessions was organised for employers to raise awareness of the Higher Apprenticeship; three half days with a session on sustainable building. These were marketed to construction companies across the south east but the take up was poor and in the end it was decided to take a different, more targeted approach.

In order to put together a targeted Higher Apprenticeship marketing campaign a small working party was established made up from North West Kent College and their partner, University of Greenwich. This identified the types of company likely to recruit and train site managers and a target list was prepared. In doing so companies were identified by size, geography, type of work undertaken and whether they employ directly or sub-contract. Discussions also sought to identify how people engage, what interests people working in the construction sector and how SusCon could attract attention through using advertisements, brochures and radio advertisements.

Sport was identified as a vehicle for attracting and engaging both companies and learners to the project. A golf day has been arranged to attract small teams from targeted employers. This has generated considerable excitement and all the 18

targeted companies invited quickly booked onto the event which will take place in March 2013. During a seated lunch, information on the Higher Apprenticeship will be given by SusCon staff seated at each table. They will also be asking those companies who have already identified candidates to explain to others why they are signing up to the qualification.

A local football club was approached and asked if a Higher Apprenticeship promotional banner could be displayed by the side of the pitch. The club proved really helpful and arranged for the banner to be printed by a club sponsor. This proved extremely cost effective. For £300 a banner is on display for a whole year. Although the club is not large, it attracts a few hundred people each week. The fact that they play different opposition each week multiplies the number of employers and potential higher apprentices who view the banner.

Additional football clubs have now been identified and are being approached in the same manner. Chelmsford Football Club has already agreed to print and display a board for a year at a total cost of £350. This will be erected on the entrance fencing and will be in full view of both home and away visitors, plus corporate guests who use the club house all year long. It is too soon yet to quantify the benefits of this activity but engagement staff are now asking those who enquire about Higher Apprenticeships where they heard about the offer.

North West Kent College has an excellent Performing Arts Department and SusCon approached them to record a simple radio advertisement for use on community radio and College radio networks. It is now used on the radio and exhibition stands and attracts people to the College stand. In this way SusCon are not only approaching new customers but also those studying at level three who may wish to progress to level four.

For further information contact

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