

Proof that marketing works

SMALL to medium sized businesses often question the value of spending money on marketing activities and are therefore reluctant to commit to a real marketing plan. This is the story of how RSR, a Kendal-based air conditioning and refrigeration company used an aggressive marketing plan to help them double their turnover inside 12 months.

RSR began life as Refrigeration Sales & Repair and had been around for over 20 years. At the end of 2003 the company was taken over by NCS Cumbria, a leading company in temperature control systems. NCS wanted to add refrigeration sales and repairs to their portfolio. Under new management, RSR needed a new image and an aggressive marketing strategy to meet its financial objectives to double its turnover within one year.

Brightspark Marketing's Jackie Harris was asked to develop a 12-month plan that would re-brand the company with a new corporate image, develop new sales and support customers in the Kendal and South Lakeland area, and to extend RSR's reach across the UK with the supply and installation of air conditioning and refrigeration products.

The strategy was based upon a mix of tactics to be rolled out at key points through the year. The marketing mix was made up from:

- A new logo: a more professional look and feel to take RSR into new markets.
- A new website: to highlight RSR's full range of products and services to potential new customers.
- Direct mail: Carefully targeted campaigns through the year, each focusing on different aspects of the business.
- Radio advertising: Lakeland Radio to promote local service and support services, and Bay Radio to extend RSR's reach with air-conditioning products and installations.
- Corporate golf sponsorship: low key events at Kendal Golf Club to bring together customers, suppliers and third party partners.
- Formal networking: Joining a Kendal-based business networking group helped RSR reach a broad range of potential new customers every week.

The first job was to get the new logo and corporate style sorted. Brightspark enlisted the help of Adam Thorp of Thorp Creative who designed the new logo. The majority of companies in the air conditioning and refrigeration world use blue as a corporate colour. Adam Thorp came up with the idea of using green. The rationale was based on the fact that all new refrigeration products need to be energy efficient and environmentally friendly. So a green logo using a radiator coil emblem was selected. It was important that the new logo worked well on vans, driver shirts, product labels, signage, marketing materials and on the website. The resulting logo is both distinctive and highly visible.

Once the new logo was agreed, the remainder of the marketing plan could be rolled out. Each activity was carefully timed to coincide with purchasing decision cycles throughout the year. At the end of 2004, RSR confirmed that it had indeed doubled its turnover and has set itself similar aggressive targets for 2005.

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