

Case study

# Hidden Treasures campaign 2013

**Collections Trust**

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## **Background**

Collections Trust is an independent organisation that works with museums, libraries and galleries to help them improve the management of their collections. We also work very hard to help improve public access to collections.

For the last two years we've organised a campaign called Hidden Treasures, specifically to connect museums with the public. We work with a media partner – this year *The Independent* - and over fifty museums across the UK. The campaign sees the participating museums putting on special events for the public. These include behind-the-scenes tours, one-off exhibitions of items that aren't usually on display, family activities and this year, even a pub quiz.

The campaign is supported by a financial grant from the Arts Council England.

## **Objectives**

The objectives of this campaign are to:

- connect the public with museum collections by providing free events
- promote local museums
- raise the profile of the Collections Trust.

## **Target audience**

The campaign is targeted at the general public – mainly families and those interested in history and culture.

## **Process**

There are many parts to this campaign. We first start by creating the concept and turning this into a funding application. Once funding is agreed, the planning and implementation begins. This year the stages were:

## **Planning**

1. Contacting museums to encourage their participation. This involved a mix of email marketing, telephone calls and meetings.
2. Helping museums to create events for the campaign.
3. Developing marketing plans.
4. Recruited a project management company, Wonderbird, to support the running of this national initiative.

## **Design**

5. Designing a logo and brand identity for the campaign.
6. Creating a website to publicise all the events and museums.
7. Creating a campaign Facebook page.
8. Designing and printing marketing material including leaflets and posters.

## **Promotion**

9. Distributing marketing materials to museums.
10. Writing copy for an article in *The Independent*.
11. Sending press releases to national and regional cultural and tourist press and media.
12. Promoting the campaign through Collections Trust's corporate communications – e-newsletters, Twitter, Facebook etc.
13. Promoting the campaign at events.

## **Implementation**

14. Ensuring that all museums have booking mechanisms in place.
15. Providing museums with event feedback questionnaires.
16. Attending as many events as possible.

## **Post campaign work**

17. Evaluation.
18. Promotion of results and news stories.
19. Preparation for 2014.

## **Outcomes**

The campaign benefits the general public, the cultural sector, the participating museums, the campaign partners and the Collections Trust in the following ways:

- The general public who attended one of the events have an interesting and fun day out. They learn about their local museum and enrich their cultural knowledge.
- The cultural sector as a whole benefits because it is promoted and because new audiences are attracted to cultural institutions.
- The participating museums benefit because they receive free nationwide advertising, which they are unlikely to achieve by themselves. They also receive new visitors, who might spend in their museum shop or cafe, make donations, or even become financial supporters.
- The campaign partners, such as the media partner, designers and project management agency benefit financially – as they are paid for their services. Their involvement is also good PR as they are associated with a successful nationwide campaign.

Collections Trust's profile is raised by the campaign and its reputation within the sector is enforced. Its reputation with Arts Council England – a funder of the project – is also maintained and this has benefits for future funding applications. Importantly, the campaign helps Collections Trust achieve one of its core aims – connecting the public with collections.

### **Key points for effective practice**

The success of this campaign rests with careful planning and communications. With so many stakeholders and participating museums to coordinate, instructions have to be clear and regular updates need to be sent. It is also important to adapt communications to the different museums – for example a communication about the marketing of the campaign to a large museum (that has a dedicated marketing team) is very different to a communication about marketing to a small, volunteer run museum that does not have a marketing team.

This year it was important to incorporate learning from the previous year's campaign. We were able to time communications and use the right 'tone' much better because we were aware of what worked (and what didn't) last year. We also had clearer targets and benchmarks, because of our analysis of the previous campaign.

### **Conclusions**

Hidden Treasures is a great example of a successful large nationwide campaign with multiple stakeholders and challenges. It demonstrates the importance of good communication and planning skills.

### **Additional information**

[www.hiddentreasures.org.uk](http://www.hiddentreasures.org.uk)

[www.collectionstrust.org.uk](http://www.collectionstrust.org.uk)

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