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SME campaign – evaluation

Purpose of the paper

1. To update the Board on the 2013/14 campaign that aimed to raise awareness and encourage use of the guidance and tools that HSE has developed for SMEs. The campaign also sought to positively influence perceptions of HSE and health and safety regulation. This paper details evaluation of the campaign activities that ran from September 2013 to early June 2014.

Background

2. HSE has created specific tools and guidance for the SME audience. These include Health and Safety Made Simple (HSMS), the Health and Safety Toolbox, Online Risk Assessments for low risk shops and offices, Example Risk Assessments covering a range of industries, and a combined Health and Safety Policy and Risk Assessment template.
3. In developing and managing the campaign, we commissioned the support of a specialist agency, 23red. Work involved creating a campaign brand that the suite of tools for SMEs could sit under, and implementing a programme of partnership marketing with commercial organisations and key trade associations. Partnership marketing with commercial organisations is an approach not previously used by HSE's small business team to engage SMEs. This campaign was used to test and evaluate its effectiveness with this traditionally hard-to-reach audience for HSE.
4. We identified the campaign target audience by size and sector. Although SMEs are defined as businesses with up to 250 employees, those with less than 50 employees are less likely to have in-house health and safety expertise and therefore are more likely to seek external support. We focused largely on five industry groups: small manufacturing; leisure; retail; office-based work and beauty, as they are all sectors where the HSMS content is applicable, and the hazards covered in the Toolbox are likely to be commonplace.
5. Prior to the start of the campaign in September 2013, 23red carried out a baseline survey of 256 small businesses in our target audience to understand levels of awareness and understanding of HSE, and importantly the specific products and tools aimed at them - HSMS and the Toolbox.

Campaign progress

Brand

6. We developed a clear, easily recognisable brand, '**H&S ABC: an easy guide to health and safety**', to help promote the guidance and tools to small businesses. The brand has been applied to relevant HSE web pages and publications, and to leaflets created to support the campaign. A specific H&S ABC home page was created to act as a landing page for all campaign activity and to signposts visitors to the guidance and tools. A short animation was also produced to promote the brand, and is available both on our website and on YouTube. The brand was developed with input from our target audience.

Partnership marketing

7. Working with 23red we identified 32 potential intermediaries, including both commercial organisations and trade associations, as possible partners to help us contact and engage hard-to-reach SMEs in our target sectors. These had the potential to reach nearly 600,000 SMEs to help us promote the tools and guidance. The agency invested significant time and effort in working with these intermediaries over several months, introducing them to the H&S ABC concept and exploring opportunities to reach target SMEs.

Digital media; PR and stakeholder engagement

8. We carried out a comprehensive range of activity through HSE owned channels to promote and raise awareness of the campaign and also through media relations.
 - To enable us to generate news coverage for the H&S ABC we conducted a short survey of SMEs to identify common myths about health and safety and developed a series of business health and safety personality types, asking SMEs which they most identified with. The results were used as the basis for media activity in March 2014 targeted at regional and local media.
 - We carried out periods of activity on Twitter in:
 - December 2013 – to coincide with the Small Business Saturday campaign managed by BIS
 - February/March 2014 – to coincide with HSE's media relations activity
 - June 2013 – HSE Twitter chat for small business
 - H&S ABC featured in 26 of the HSE e-bulletins that have cross-over into our target audience

- H&S ABC editorial features were included within the Health and Safety Newsletter in October 2013 and spring 2014 and were also included on HSE's LinkedIn page.
- Partner packs were sent to all members of HSE's Small Business Trade Association Forum (SBTAF) covering more than 60 Trade Associations. The packs contained everything they would need to help them raise awareness of H&S ABC with their members, including product information, quotes and digital adverts. Presentations were provided at both SBTAF Forum and Board meetings throughout the campaign.
- Within HSE, the campaign was promoted through the News centre and e-express news bulletin.

Outcomes and key learnings

9. The campaign sought to increase awareness of the online tools and guidance and encourage use of them, whilst also positively influencing perceptions of HSE and H&S regulation. No statistical targets were set for the campaign, as there was no intelligence to enable meaningful targets to be identified. This campaign has served to provide a baseline from which targets can be set for future activity on H&S ABC.
10. Post-campaign evaluation took place in June 2014. 23red conducted an online survey with a new 250-strong sample of businesses, representative of SMEs in our five target sectors, to assess awareness and use of H&S ABC and the tools and guidance as well as awareness and perceptions of HSE and health and safety. In addition, Communications Directorate analysed PR and digital activity and visitor traffic on relevant HSE web pages.

Brand

11. The development of a strong brand with supporting assets (e.g. leaflets and the animation) gave the campaign a distinct identity and offer for small businesses. The animation was viewed more than 2,100 times on YouTube, during the campaign period and the H&S ABC landing page received almost 16,500 visits. When compared to other areas of the HSE website this is not a significantly large number of visits but as our activity was targeted at driving SMEs to this web page, and we know that SMEs are hard-to-reach and engage, we consider this a reasonable achievement.
12. The survey results showed that:
 - Around a third of survey respondents were aware of the new H&S ABC brand at the end of the campaign period.
 - Around half of survey respondents (48%) were aware of HSMS at the end of the campaign, an increase of 9% from the baseline 2013 survey
 - Just over a quarter of survey respondents (29%) were aware of the Toolbox at the end of the campaign, an increase of 3% from the baseline 2013 survey.

13. Whilst these results are encouraging, it should be noted that they are not necessarily statistically representative of the picture across all businesses in the target audience.
14. There was a decrease of 8% in the proportion of survey respondents viewing health and safety as a burden between the two surveys. This supports the findings of the recent National Audit Office Business Perceptions Survey which identified a reduction in the number of businesses finding health and safety regulation a burden.
15. Whilst awareness of the guidance and tools amongst survey respondents has increased, the survey revealed a decrease in the number of businesses actually using them, compared to the 2013 survey results. HSMS reduced by 8% to 77%, Toolbox reduced by 15% to 70%. The reasons for the reduction in those using the tools are unknown, however, it is important to note that two-thirds of those surveyed said they intended to use the tools in the future.

Partnership Marketing

16. Of the 32 possible partners, 23red made contact with all, explaining the aim of the partnership working and the benefits of acting as an intermediary for HSE, offering face-to-face meetings and supporting material in partner packs. 23red were able to secure firm commitments from:
 - four commercial partners - Aviva, Lloyds TSB, Zurich and Frillo
 - six trade associations - British Beer and Pub Association, Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), Hair and Beauty Industry Association (HABIA), National Hairdressing Federation, Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) and the UK Standards Setting Body for Business Support and Business Enterprise (SFEDI).
17. These partners have promoted H&S ABC through their communication channels with an estimated reach of nearly 300,000 small businesses.
18. The partnership marketing activity has, without doubt, extended our reach to SMEs who would not normally have engagement with HSE. Most partners understood the relevance of the campaign and were receptive initially – especially where health and safety was seen a good fit to their business. However, the significant work involved in making suitable contacts with intermediaries and seeing this through to actual activity was difficult and very resource intensive. Even though 23red are experienced and have a strong track record of engaging with intermediaries and trade associations on behalf of clients, promoting HSE guidance and advice proved more difficult to ‘sell’ in comparison to organisations offering financial incentives or business growth opportunities. This resulted in limited numbers of intermediaries undertaking practical activity.
19. The work involved in sustaining the partnerships is challenging. Finding the right person in a large commercial organisation who has the authorisation to agree to promote material is complicated, particularly with changing personnel and competing priorities. Often it comes down to whether there is an

enthusiastic and supportive individual who will encourage the partnership and ensure it has some longevity.

Digital media and PR

20. HSE's own digital and PR activities were successful in promoting awareness of H&S ABC.

- HSE e-bulletins generated almost a third (6,000) of the total visits to the H&S ABC website during the campaign.
- Nearly 2,000 more visits came via HSE's news pages and a further 2,000 came from elsewhere within the HSE website.
- With significant visitor peaks experienced in December 2013 and March 2014, more than 2,000 visits can be attributed to HSE's PR and Twitter activity, although it is difficult to know which sectors or sizes of businesses have generated the website traffic.
- News releases were successful in generating 30 print media articles in local and regional media, which reached more than 640,000 SME owners.

Costs

21. This campaign remained within budget with the overall costs at £97,980. This included the brand development, identification of suitable partners and the supporting work to create partnerships, the baseline and evaluation research exercises and the production of the campaign animation. HSE also provided resources from its Cross Cutting Interventions Directorate to make sure the material was in line with HSE's policy position for supporting SMEs, and Communications Directorate who project managed the campaign and led on the social and traditional media activity.

Summary and next steps

22. The wide range of SMEs across the UK are a known 'hard-to-reach' group and the H&S ABC campaign has been a good opportunity to test the partnership marketing approach and see if it should be continued.

23. The evaluation results around the awareness of the brand and specific products are encouraging. Through developing a strong brand, we have created clear signposting for SMEs to relevant guidance and tools. The indication is that this resonates with SMEs and we can capitalise on this through continued use of the brand, leaflets and animation.

24. This campaign has also highlighted the strength of HSE's existing communication channels. The use of social media is growing and the positive outcome from the use of twitter is encouraging. In line with the recommendations from the recent Triennial review, we will continue to make use of all appropriate modern forms of media now available to promote the H&S ABC to SMEs.

25. Looking forward, we will focus our partnership efforts on those commercial partners who have taken definite action to promote the H&S ABC. Trade Associations that are not currently members of SBTAF will be invited to join and we will engage with them through that forum.
26. Whilst SME awareness levels have improved, the survey results indicate a decrease in the number of small businesses using the guidance and tools between the two samples. These results are informing part of our wider considerations as to how HSE should continue to support SMEs. We are analysing our own intelligence and using all our direct links with SMEs, including these new partners, to profile the audience and try to understand their behaviours in relation to managing health and safety. This work will help us identify what further support, if any, SMEs require from HSE. We will bring a paper to the Board in due course reporting on this further work and analysis, to seek the Board's views on the future direction and nature of our work in support of SMEs.
27. In addition, in view of current proposals to amend the application of health and safety law to the self-employed, communications activity is planned to support those SMEs that are self-employed but will not be exempt from health and safety legislation, to ensure that they are signposted to our suite of simple guidance and tools.

Action

28. The Board to note the outcomes from this pilot approach to partnership marketing, recognising the overall impact of our work to create partnerships, stimulate media activity, and build a legacy of the new H&S ABC brand and assets.

Paper clearance

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