

How we have marketed....



...the good, the lessons, the challenges





Who's heard of Congleton?

In some ways an ordinary market town..

Located in Cheshire East Borough

Population 28,000

Former Textile Mill Town - a Rich Heritage

High percentage of out-commuters

Active Town Council and Partnership

....needs to work to stand out from the crowd....

Congleton
beartown
where friends are made



First steps... forming a Partnership

- Sept 2005 – a partnership was formed to access MTI Rural Recovery funding.
- Members of the local community recruited to the partnership
- Successful in gaining £300k to improve the town
- 2008 MTI funding dried up through NWDA, but wanted to keep the group going...





Keeping the momentum...

- Restructuring resulted in the creation of a 22 strong Exec Committee.
- Sub-committees formed to deal with issues
- Core mission of the partnership is about economic regeneration
- Currently CTC pays for co-ordinators post and CEBC gives £10k towards projects.
- 2010 – Partnership elevated to NAG
- Find determined people to fight for your town



Enter the BEAR team ...

- Born out of the Business Group November 2008
- **B**randing, **E**nriching, **A**waking, **R**eviving
- Atmospheric Study - The Feel Factor
- What is our USP?





First Steps

- What's should we use for Congleton
- Brand Audit – paper, digital, on the street
- NO TO THE BEAR...aggressive, cruel
- YES TO THE BEAR ...everywhere
- Unchain the bear!





Why Congleton is Beartown

- In 1600s the Town Bear died before the Wakes – Town Council lent money from bible fund to buy a new bear
- Folk story: Congleton Rare, Congleton Rare, Sold the Bible to Buy a Bear
- Name of beartown used locally
- The bear used in business names, club emblems, built into fabric of the town.





Brands used by others?

- Take inspiration from brands you like
- How do major cities brand themselves
- Think BIG!!



Get Buy in from the Start!

- Presented ideas to partnership and CTC
- Created interest from the local media
- Expect some to love and some to hate!
- Be Brave - Believe in what you are doing

Find your local talent!

- Found 6 Congleton design/marketing agencies
- Gave a design brief – 3 took the challenge!
- Largely voluntary – minimal funding via CTC and Partnership
- Took longer than anticipated to agree design
- Trade mark applied for by CTC

Excellent standard of designs



Agreeing a winner wasn't easy!





Children are the future....

- Ran a story competition with schools – went to assemblies
- 300+ entries – being made into a story book
- Congleton children love the bear connections
- Organised two big Teddy Bear picnics (500+ at each)
- Nearly all Christmas Card entries had bears on them!
- Schools still coming up with ideas!



Get Help...Accept Help

- The project became too big to handle
- Advertised in the local press for volunteers
- Created a great team of 10-12
- Created even more ideas
- Need someone to take control and agree key objectives for each quarter



How we've used brand so far

- Lamp-post sails
- Empty shops
- Stationary, leaflets
- Community website



Not so easy...

- New for Cheshire East
- Planning permission took months
- Some objections
- Fund raising through local firms – hard work
- Quality excellent
- Great impact, worth the effort



Vinyls in Empty Shops

- Funded via CEBC Recession funding
- Permission given for two empty shops



Erected summer
2009

Still as fresh today

Easy to remove





Launched a Community Web Site in November 2009

Getting over 1600 visits a month and growing...

Hard work chasing for fresh information

Currently using one person as administrator

In hindsight would have included Congleton
in the name!





Come & have fun at the

Teddy Bears Picnic 2010



Bring a picnic and your Teddy

On Thursday 24th June 2010

12.30pm till 2.30pm

at Congleton Park near the Bandstand.

*Lots to do on the day: Storytelling, colour in a bear,
meet the life size bears & much more...*

All children must be accompanied by an adult.

The Teddy Bear's Picnic organised by team. Budget of around £150! Advertised through play schools, nurseries, websites, twitter – word of mouth and viral.



Seize opportunities to link

- It made sense for BBC's Pudsey Bear to come to Beartown... good PR
- Posters of Animal Asia bears are displayed on the Beartown Buses
- Beartown Brewery support animal asia

complete
beartown
where friends are made



Next Steps

- Publishing Beartown Tales
- Merchandise
- Bearmania – 50 statutes
- community art
- Encourage more businesses to use it
- Work with developers – public realm



Challenges

- Working with volunteers
- Getting the right skills base
- Funding opportunities - on a shoe string!
- Ownership of the brand
- Doing the boring stuff – the reports, the applications, the chasing
- The objectionable minority

Signs of Success.....



New businesses want to call themselves Beartown....

Organisations are approaching the team with ideas for Beartown

The team is being invited to speak to community groups

Sports teams are buying bear mascots rugby, football

Winning a North West Market Town Award



Lessons we've learnt

- Believe in what you are doing
- Accept and ask for help
- Build in time for delays – volunteers only have so much time to give
- Aim high, have a goal and don't spread yourself too thin
- Community buy-in is essential but takes time!
- Make a Plan!



Members of the Bear Team

www.mybeartown.co.uk

