

# 2019 BMJ Awards Merchant Marketing Campaign of the Year Entry



**GENERAL**

Howarth Timber & Building Supplies are delighted to nominate the *Landscape 2018* promotion for the 2019 BMJ Awards, as the most comprehensive product campaign in the company's 178-year history, marking a new turning point for the business in how Marketing and Promotions are undertaken. It was decided in 2017 that the promotion over summer would focus on landscaping and garden product sales, and would be more product-focused than previous campaigns, which have always tended to be more brand-led. This is owing to the large product portfolio within Howarth Timber.

The new approach unites all 31 branches under the same promotion, which owing to regional price variations has not always been possible. This campaign reflects the new approach to business that has been heralded by major developments to the structure of the business, introducing a new Commercial Director role, as well a full restructure of the National Sales function. This was the first Marketing Campaign co-ordinated by Commercial Director Paul Bullivant and new Marketing Manager Gavin Knowles.

The campaign ran from April - July and was intended to use a wide spread of marketing methods to communicate this, where previous campaigns had tended to use two or three main channels in smaller regional areas. The campaign will have another smaller followup campaign to run towards the end of the year.

**OBJECTIVES**

The two main objectives in mind for this campaign were to achieve ROI on expenditure through increased sales in branches across the landscaping range, and to increase traffic on the Howarth Timber website as it continues to grow.

These would later be measured against year on year statistics to determine success. As previously mentioned, product campaigns tended to be more regional, so this would be a good yardstick with which to measure the difference in approach.

**IN PRACTICE**

Before the launch of the promotion, a Landscaping Category day was held, where our 15 main Landscaping product suppliers that would be featured in the promotion, met our branch staff and sales teams in small groups





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over the course of a day to describe their new product offerings in their own words and really help get the customer-facing staff comfortable talking about the products available. This also included branch managers and periphery staff who would benefit from this. The feedback from both staff and suppliers was that this format had been engaging for branch staff who otherwise may not have direct contact with suppliers and product demonstrations. The success of this event has facilitated the addition of several more events throughout the year, focusing on other product areas and suppliers.

A large *Landscape 2018* catalogue was produced that covered everything available within the promotion, organised by product sub-range. The catalogue took a month to put together and was given to both the branches and the external sales reps. The catalogue was designed to resemble more of a consumer-friendly style to reflect the very visual products on display, as well as to make the price and benefits as clear as possible. The catalogue became extremely popular, with several extended print runs being made to accommodate higher demand from the branches. The branches also received additional point of sale, including posters, flyers and banners.

An SMS campaign accompanied the promotional activity, reaching an estimated 35,000 Howarth Timber account holders, with a shortlink URL to view the catalogue on their smartphone browser. Each branch selected 3-5 products from the promotion that sold well in their areas or that they particularly wanted to push, and the SMS messages for their branch were then tailored to highlight these products.

A large-scale Social Media campaign ran alongside the campaign, predominantly on Facebook due to the more flexible ad targeting platform, but with additional smaller-budget ads running on LinkedIn and Twitter. The promotion was targeted at both customers and non-customers, with a selection of the available offers and a website splash page to link through to. The audience themselves was highly segmented to generate the best ROI for the campaign, targeting users not only through profession, but on other factors such as buying behaviour and lifestyle. Over the course of the campaign, the posts achieved a combined reach of 75,000 users and generated 4,500 clicks through to the website.

A PPC campaign was initiated by the web team to complement the campaign, with particular focus on decking and fencing.

Printed adverts were run in certain areas to accompany the rest of the campaign, designed in the same style as the rest of the *Landscape 2018* collateral. The publications chosen were largely retail-focused with a home & garden theme, as well as to more specific landscaping publications. In all cases, both visiting the branches and visiting the website were pushed as a call to action. The circulation figures for the publications indicate a potential reach of 200,000 readers. Several branches had ongoing advertising with local radio stations, in these cases new advert messages were produced to reflect the landscaping offers, with particular focus on the products that sold well in that area. The RAJAR figures for these stations combined reaches over 750,000 listeners.

### RESULTS

The campaign has proved a resounding success, both in terms of sales, website traffic and periphery awareness.

The campaign materials cost a total of £18,000 including printed material, paid ad placements and events. The year on year comparison shows an increase of £428,000 sales across the products featured in the promotional period of April - June, with fantastic growth in areas such as decking and fencing, as well as sleepers and summerhouses. Website traffic was increased by 60% during the months of the promotion, with website sales at their highest since the website relaunched in 2015. *Landscape 2018* as one of the first promotions under the new business structure and including all the branches, has proved the benefit of synergy between branches, buying teams and Marketing, to create a multi-channel campaign that is both focused and with a clear goal in mind.

The campaign proved so successful that it was extended until the end of September, with projected sales of over £1m over the 6 months.

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**75,000** users

**GENERATING**  
**4,500** clicks

**CAMPAIGN COST**  
**£18,000**

**INCREASED SALES OF**  
**£428,000**  
across the products featured in the promotion

**WEBSITE TRAFFIC**  
**↑ 60%**  
during the months of the promotion

