

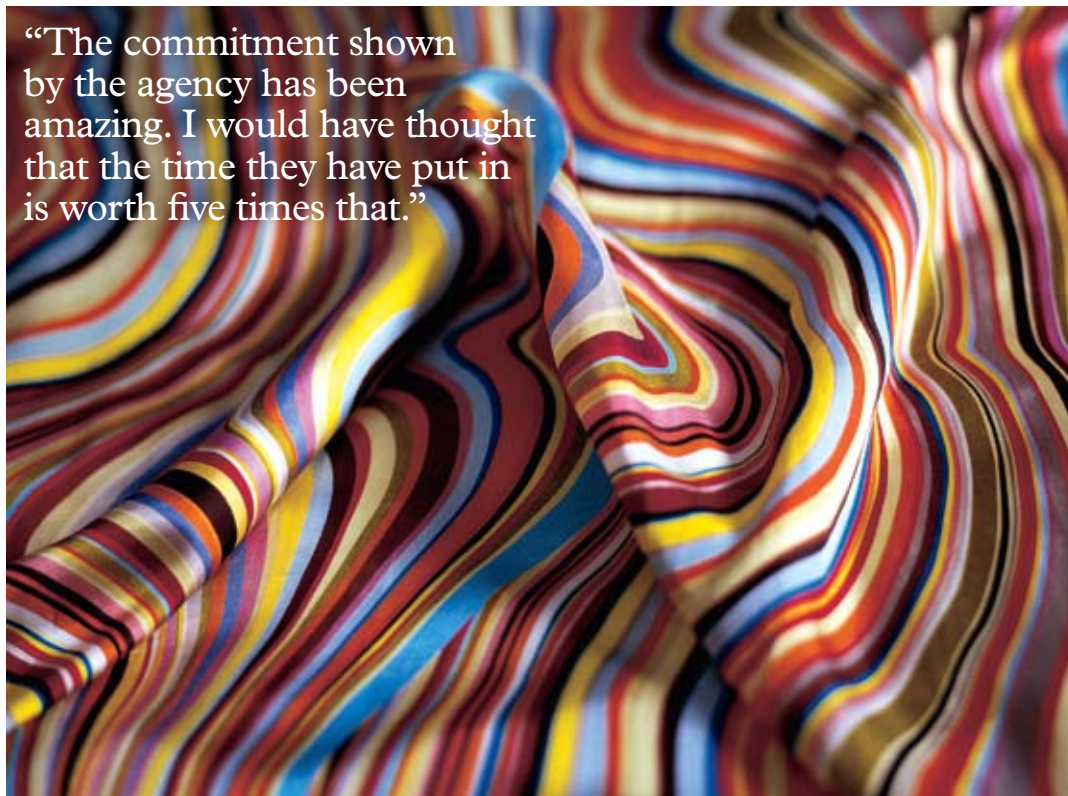
Experience Nottinghamshire

Lots of disparate offers and no unifying identity

Robin Hood has changed to become a far more culturally diverse offer for businesses and tourists alike. It had no single identity under which it could speak to the world and worse still - no unifying voice. Our brief was to deliver all of this and much, much more.



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Background

The Big N for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire created an iconic marque for both City and County. It came in the midst of the City's fierce press coverage and criticism for gun crime and gang related issues.

By bringing every major public sector body and all of the major employers into the consultation and approval process, we helped them all speak with a united voice, rallying around a united identity and slowly turned around press and public opinion.

Strategy, target and objectives

The strategy from the very outset was to unite the region to get all parties working together. The public face of this was ultimately a logo and identity system but the process of getting to the finished project was every bit as important as the end result itself.

This is the key difference between a place brand and any normal branding project. It is the process that is king. The end result needs to work but it will get negative reactions whatever you do, so make sure you get the process element exactly right and draw all the benefits from this that you possibly can.

One great example must be getting all of the district councils within the County to agree on the single strategy and actually work together in pooling advertising, marketing and promotional budgets. This allowed a far more consistent approach as well as stronger buying power, clearer sector targeting and a better understanding of what we had as a city and county. It also suited in perfectly with the wider plan for the region drawn up to 'attract and disperse' - ie to bring them in with one offer and ensure we offered them additional services and things to do.

On a business footing it meant that the entire team worked together creating a very tightly focussed offer and not just jumping and reacting to any external enquiry.

The City and County already had very many jewels, but very few of them were properly promoted throughout the world - including Robin Hood. The biggest issue was that the name Robin Hood is known throughout the world, but backed up by almost no credible offer. We had to ensure that everyone understood what else Nottingham and its Shire County neighbour had to offer too, by leveraging off Robin Hood's name.

Overall Concept

As we said, the process was vital and we lead over 100 presentations and meetings throughout the consultation period.

We asked the people of the region too, what they thought and collated over 750 public responses into a combined and coherent vision.

Our concept was to create a light overarching identity that was completely free of copyright to allow any relevant Nottinghamshire organisation to use the logo, images or words that were created.

This took some crafty buying and a bit of legal work, but the end result was well worth the initial input of effort.

The 'N' itself was seen as a stamp of authority to sit on any and every correspondence. It was to be the easiest to reproduce and the easiest to see, hence the incredibly clear and uncluttered delivery.

The imagery - which was also central to the overall offer was designed to carry the 'N' right through its heart. Every shot - and there were 30+ of them has an 'N' about its person. Some are easier to spot than others but its fun trying to see where they are. These images have been used in literally hundreds of applications from University prospectuses to national press and recruitment ads right through to posters adorning the walls of private sector car parks in the City.

Coverage for the project

PR was a double edged sword and initial coverage went from locally supportive to some outrageous criticism throughout the world and many tongue in cheek comments about us killing off Robin Hood.

But a few years on it is being used by more and more organisations and the initial negatives have slowly become quietly positive and in some cases overtly flattering.

Results

The beauty of this identity system is it's ability to communicate extremes - from heritage to night life - with both relevance and consistency.

It has also paid for itself many times over because there are now over 200 organisations subscribed as Champions. The Champions back Nottinghamshire's marketing with time and money and use the identity in relevant areas of their own marketing.

What did the client say about it?

Dr John Heeley, Chief Executive said of his £120,000 investment in the full branding and consultation process with Purple Circle "The commitment shown by the agency has been amazing. I would have thought that the time they have put in is worth five times that"