



Case Study Two: Worcester City Council

Background

Worcester is a popular tourist and university city, and acts as the market town for the county. It has a significant litter problem with around 600,000 pieces of chewing gum littering the city's pavements prior to the campaign. In addition, the medieval street layout and compact shopping district makes street cleaning very difficult.

Engaging the community

The campaign was discussed with a wide range of individuals, organisations and businesses to gain support and raise awareness. Among these were councillors, city centre community support officers, Student Union representatives, community centre workers, a local environmental charity, Visit Worcester, the Chamber of Commerce, British Rail, First Bus, and businesses near monitoring sites.

The launch

The Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder used the gum removal machine outside the Guildhall, which is right in the centre of the high street, making for a high profile photo opportunity. This was timed so that it would be included in the main evening newspaper edition and on the BBC radio afternoon 'drive time' programme. The event received priority feature coverage, displacing news about the opening of a high-profile £3 million sports centre which took place the same morning.

Media support

- Feature in 'City Life', the council's magazine, which is delivered to 40,000 properties in the city, plus an article on the council's website
- Posters in public buildings and on large city centre bins
- Roving display that travelled around the six community centres and four sports centres
- Radio coverage at launch on the BBC, with a follow-up feature covering the results
- Detailed interview on Wyvern FM, pre-launch
- Worcester News prepared an item prior to the launch and coverage of the launch itself
- Worcester Standard covered the launch and ran a piece on street cleaning, and later published the campaign results



Monitoring

The sites chosen were all in the city centre, as this is the area hit hardest by gum litter. Various factors determined which sites could be used: accessibility to water for the cleaning machines; proximity to other sites to maximise the cleaning team's time; sites that wouldn't cause a major obstruction to passers by or traffic; areas relevant to the campaign's target audience, such as fashion chains; areas where youngsters would congregate, such as the cinema and take-away shops; along a pub frontage, popular with smokers; and a couple of busy shopping streets. The cleaning crew were involved throughout the campaign and so understood the importance of keeping to the cleansing dates.

Results

- Gum increased outside the pub but declined elsewhere
- Highest results were recorded in the main shopping areas
- The lowest scores were recorded where youngsters were to be found, outside the cinema and take-aways
- Overall, gum litter was reduced by a remarkable 51%