

The Argus

The brief: With a planned move back to community news, The Argus appointed East to create a bespoke community relations strategy that encouraged engagement with the hearts and minds of the newspaper's readers so that relationships could be rebuilt.

The work: The strategy focused on harnessing the power of basic word of mouth in communities by providing a 'human face' to the Argus, thereby creating greater understanding and loyalty amongst local people towards their newspaper. East's approach was to ensure Argus representatives attended key community group events providing the opportunity to engage more with readers and promote key messages.

To kick-start the campaign, East used its membership within two key online community forums to target community and voluntary groups and key staff to promote The Argus. East's word-of-mouth campaign within the sector also encouraged groups to come forward.

East developed a no-budget hand-out for community groups with information on how to contact the newspaper, what makes news, what to include in a press release, along with a 'call to action' for community groups to contact The Argus.

East organised for an Editor from The Argus newspaper group to run a media workshop at a local community sector conference, which was well attended by community and voluntary sector groups.

From the perspective of The Argus, journalists and key staff were able to work with grass-roots community groups to change perceptions of the paper amongst its readership heartland, as well as create a better understanding of how the media works. Based on evidence from online forums and the conference, over 150 community representatives have now met an Argus journalist for the first time and the reputation of The Argus amongst the community and voluntary sector has improved due to the campaign.

"The Argus started working with East Communications to tackle concerns about how effectively we are reaching the valuable communities who have traditionally made up our readership. East helped us in the first instance to recognise the issues and to understand where our weaknesses lay. At The Argus we continue to work on our strategy within these communities and will always turn to East Communications for their advice and knowledge."
Pam Birkby, Brand and Marketing Manager, The Argus