



Hertfordshire 'Get Active' Roadshows January 2007

Feedback Report

OVERVIEW

We decided to do our 'Get Active' Roadshows in January so that we could capture people who may have been considering getting more active as part of a New Year resolution!

As this was the first time we had done something on this scale we decided to try a variety of different formats to see what worked the best.

- Weekday versus Weekend
- Large roadshow with demos versus small roadshow with information
- With MC versus without MC
- Various ways of distributing leaflets & info on the day
- Open area versus cordoned off area
- Different types of demo's and interactive elements

There was a total of 5 roadshows:

Howard Centre (Welwyn Garden City) **Large Roadshow**

Brookfield Centre (Broxbourne) **Small Roadshow**

Market Place (St Albans) **Small Roadshow**

Marlowes Centre (Hemel Hempstead) **Large Roadshow**

Harlequin Centre (Watford) **Large Roadshow**

PLUS; An opportunity to promote our campaign at the Watford v Liverpool match at Vicarage Lane.

Leaflet

We put together a leaflet which had loads of free activities on offer across Hertfordshire during January and February. There was a cut-out voucher which people could use to get their first session free. This was done in conjunction with local authorities and local sports clubs and physical activity providers.

Free-Giveaways

Sport England: 'Everyday Sport' campaign goodies - duffle bags, baseball caps, T-shirts, pedometers.

Herts Sports Partnership: Branded carrier bags, mini-Frisbees, mini water-bottles and pens. Also inside the bags were health/fruit bars and a limited number of leaflets e.g. contact information for key people around the county, our 'Get Active' leaflet and British Heart Foundation leaflets.

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Demonstrations

The demo's were a cross between 'sport' and 'physical activity' and included: Professional football & basketball freestylers, Boccia, various group fitness activities such as aerobics and boxercise, Chi Kung, Hip Hop dancers, Break dancers, Line dancers, Badminton, Netball, Kick-boxing, Gymnastics, Medau Movement, Speed Stacking, Cheerleaders, Kids dance (all sorts), Egyptian Belly dancing.

Interactive Activities

Basketball shoot-out, Speed stacking competition, a chance to learn free-style tricks, a chance to join in with aerobics, line-dancing etc., rowing challenge, vibro-gym (similar to a power plate), a chance to learn a bit of a dance / break dance routine.

Other

We arranged to have sports personalities and sporting champions at the larger roadshows including: Claire Strange (British Paralympic Basketball player), Jenny Copnall (British XC Mountain Bike Champion), Richard Haughton (Saracens and England Rugby Player) and James Chambers (Watford FC Player).

We also had nutritionists and smoking cessation experts on hand to provide advice.

OUTCOMES

The roadshow formats which worked the best were:

Large Roadshow:

- On the weekend
- With an MC
- With a cordoned off 'stage' area for demos and staff
- With WOW factor demo's that attracted lots of interest from passers by e.g. dancing, gymnastics, group demonstrations
- With one main leaflet being handed out & additional leaflets in the free-giveaway bag, the only other leaflets that were given out to people's hands were those which related specifically to the demo taking place; during and immediately after the demo.

Small Roadshow:

- A simple information stand with free giveaways **
- This would work on a weekday or weekend

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- Easier to promote one main message - 'get active' as we didn't have all the demo providers trying to 'sell' themselves
- Worked really well as it was:
 - 1) Less intimidating to passers-by
 - 2) Easier to interact with people
 - 3) People were more willing to stop and talk

NB ** we did have a street entertainer (Tommy Baker - Basketball Freestyler at the small roadshow; I don't think this made a difference in attracting people to stop and talk to us).

Other

- Limiting the amount of information leaflets being given out and the different pop-up banners/ information boards that demonstrators could bring with them was really important in keeping one clear message.
- Free-giveaways/pedometers worked really well in data capture.

What Didn't Work?

- Interviews with sporting champions. However, this worked better if they had a chat over the microphone whilst a related demonstration was taking place and if they joined in with the demo.
- Sporting Champions just 'being there'. Watford FC player worked well as he was a high-profile personality for that area. If sports people are used for these events it is important that either 1) they have a very clear role or 2) that they are high profile.
- The leaflets with free activities were not hugely successful based on the number of completed vouchers which have been returned to us. I think this is because they were not targeted enough. Time constraints in producing this leaflet were a major factor affecting this. In hindsight this would have worked better if:
 - 1) The leaflets had vouchers inside them for the specific demo activities being showcased.
 - 2) The activities could maybe have been more specific to each area we were in for the roadshow rather than covering the whole county.
 - 3) Possibly offering 'discount' rather than 'free' as this can add value/incentive to something.

In future, we will aim to co-ordinate the free activities in each district with the demonstrations at the roadshows. This will also help to reduce the number of different leaflets being handed out by different clubs and provide a 'slicker' delivery.

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CONSIDERATIONS/SUGGESTIONS

- **Messaging**

Ensure that the message being communicated is simple and clear. If possible, avoid trying to promote all elements of sport/health/fitness.

An interesting finding from the Sport England follow-up research was that a large number of people said they didn't find out anything new - which can be interpreted as; generally, people know that eating healthily and being more active is good for them - hence we do not need to 'preach' this to them but simply give them the routes to make changes, thus appropriate messages can be formulated.

Our overall message for the roadshows for encouraging participation aimed to focus on the 'fun' element rather than the seriousness of why we should be healthy and active.

'Being active can be fun! Whatever your age, interests or ability level there is something for everyone - it is just about finding something that suits you, something you enjoy doing.'

Therefore, the research findings suggest that we could simply promote this 'be active' message along with highlighting routes to how to become more active and take part in sports rather than the whole 'you should be doing x amount of exercise each week to be healthy' or 'you should be eating 5-a-day' and so on. The health, smoking and nutrition could almost be a secondary element to the roadshow with this type of information just going in to the bags, if included at all.

- **Staffing/Volunteers**

- 1) Have lots of knowledgeable staff on hand to talk to people. If we had more staff we could have engaged with lots more people and data captured more.
- 2) It is vital that all staff and volunteers are briefed on the 'message' and their individual roles and responsibilities.
- 3) It may also help if staff/volunteers are assigned specific tasks during the course of the day to make sure that all bases are covered at all times e.g. having one person dedicated to signing people up for pedometers.

- **WOW Factor.**

- 1) Demonstrations definitely need a WOW factor. They need to be interesting enough to attract and retain the attention of passers by. If sticking to sports - make

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sure that the demonstrations have really been planned to create a buzz and focal point e.g. a Karate demonstration with block breaking or an aerial gymnastics display as opposed to simulating a game of tennis or training session drills.

2) Don't be too worried about using demonstrations that are not strictly 'sport'. We found that dancing was really popular and really drew in crowds, giving us an opportunity to then speak to people about generally doing more activity and sport.

- 'Next Step'
 - 1) Make sure the 'next step' for those who want to be more active is really easy and clear e.g. clear signposting to further information and action!
 - 2) If possible aim to link demonstrations to free/discounted sessions in the locality.

SUMMARY

- Overall, we were happy with how the roadshows went in terms of a tool for engaging with the general public.
- By the final one, we had found a 'winning' format.
- The Sport England follow up research has shown that these roadshows are worthwhile and that we have had some impact on those who we came in to contact with. It was also useful in informing us about the type of information and messages we should be putting out through roadshow events.
- We now have plans to develop our Hertfordshire roadshows in the future and we do intend to build them in as a regular feature in our annual events calendar. Budget permitting, we will probably do a mixture of large and small style roadshow events. The large ones are complex and time-consuming to organise so operating small roadshows will allow us to get to more places around the county.

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www.sportinherts.org.uk (new website coming soon!!)

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