

CASE STUDY St John's Innovation Centre (SJIC)

Our Brief: • To raise awareness of two business support programmes
• To develop the marketing communications skills of the new Marketing Co-ordinator

Vitual Director Time: From 1 to 6 days in any given month



Background

St John's Innovation Centre (SJIC) is an established hub for innovative technology businesses in Cambridge, UK. Revenue is derived from tenants and government-funded contracts for the delivery of business support programmes.

We started working with SJIC in April 2010. Marcie Bell led the brief and two of her associates helped to boost capacity until Sam Roe, the Marketing Co-ordinator was established in role. Like all clients, SJIC needed to make sure they got maximum value from any marketing spend but Janette Pallas, Enterprise Manager, wondered if her interpretation of this would be a step too far.

“ We were committed to building capacity in-house in the most cost-effective way, hence our decision to recruit Sam but I was concerned that Marcie would think it cheeky of us to ask them to support Sam's development. I needn't have worried. She completely 'got' our need for a sustainable solution and played a critical role in developing Sam's skills. ”

Down to business

We developed an integrated communications plan and re-defined the key messages. In the early stages the plan involved lots of content generation – video, case studies, press releases and photography.

This provided a wealth of material for distribution via multiple channels including media. It also proved useful for credentials when SJIC was tendering competitively. With the content ready to go, we then focused on enabling SJIC to engage in the social networks. A blog was set up and a schedule of posts developed, drawing on the expertise of the delivery team. Through a combination of workshops, 'how to' handouts and ongoing guidance, the team grew in confidence over time.

Building Capacity

Sam Roe joined SJIC in June 2010 with a degree in Media and Culture and 7 months work experience under her belt in PR, publishing and event-related roles. She hoped her 12 month contract would translate into a permanent job but knew she'd need to prove herself quickly.

With the plan agreed, she and Marcie met regularly, with Janette Pallas, to agree who would do what. Over time, with regular meetings and telephone contact, Sam's confidence and knowledge base grew and she was able to take on a larger proportion of the work.

What it delivered

Looking back on the last year, Sam says:

“ When I first started at SJIC I had basic PR and marketing experience but Marcie and her associates filled in the gaps and opened my eyes to new communications opportunities. I have learnt so much in the last 18 months, from how to really work a press release to planning and content managing a blog, not to mention social networking. My confidence has really grown but the big win for me is that my contract turned into a permanent job that I really enjoy. ”

Janette Pallas concludes:

“ Working with The Foundry House has delivered great value. Awareness was raised quickly, our business support programmes exceeded targets and Sam is now handling most of our day-to-day communications tasks. We miss working with Marcie in a more intense capacity but continue to call on her when we have specific needs. Her Associates are a useful asset too – it was good to know that there was more capacity if we needed it. ”

For an informal chat about how we can help your business grow,
please call Marcie Bell on 01480 880986