

Swansea University

SHORTLISTED

Best Marketing
Campaign



Summary

On 8 December 2017 Swansea University won the Santander Cycles University Challenge against 25 UK Universities. During the final phase (6 November – 8 December) the successful crowdfunding campaign raised £100,210 towards a bike share scheme and secured them an additional £100,000 of capital funding from Santander.

The competition aligned directly with the institution's 2020 Strategy which commits it to embedding "environmentally responsible behaviours to prepare students for sustainable living and employment as global citizens in the 21st century".

The campaign's success and win against four excellent finalists enabled them to establish Wales' first (50 bike) bike share scheme in Swansea.

Submission

Unlike the other four finalist universities which focused on their campus communities, Swansea's small Estates Directorate team adopted a city-wide approach aiming to harness the significant appetite for bike sharing evident across the city. The team targeted:

- Swansea University students and staff
- Local and national businesses
- The local community

With a budget of £12,000 the team developed a suite of excellent supporting print and digital collateral, reaching their target markets through an integrated mix of:

- Local print and radio advertising
- Local social media campaigns
- Local engagement events across the University and city
- Emailshots
- PR activity
- Staff and student communications
- B2B Sales activity

Activity focused on driving traffic to a Crowdfunder webpage (www.crowdfunder.co.uk/bikes4s-wansea) set up to maximise conversions and pledge values with a well-crafted promotional video and clear campaign pitch. Carefully selected and well-advertised rewards offered supporters various levels of free scheme use in return for pledges, further incentivising leads to convert. The team quickly got to grips with the essentials of crowdfunding. Gaining insight into the nuances enabled them to effectively plan around the three key phases which involve a fast start, a midway dip and a final push.

Pre-campaign activity and a significant launch ensured large numbers of supporters were ready to pledge on day one, taking Swansea straight to the top of the leaderboard.

An innovative “Race Across the City” saw local celebrities and radio DJs racing across Swansea by bus, car and Santander bike. This event, coupled with daily team meetings to review tactics in response to campaign insights helped counteract the midway dip. An intense final week push got the web link in front of as many people as possible through targeted email and social campaigns, ensuring momentum was maintained right up until the final minutes.

Campaign successes include

- Winning first place, raising £100,210 and securing £100,000 of capital funding to establish an affordable, sustainable transport solution for the city, reducing congestion and emissions, improving air quality, providing car parking solutions and promoting health and wellbeing.
- Exceeding the £53,178 target by 188%, with 612 supporters (50% more than the runner up).
- Exceeding expectations and targets which has allowed the University to establish an extra (sixth) hub for the community of Mumbles with more hubs in the pipeline.
- Attracting 16,945 unique visits to the webpage resulting in a total of 612 pledges – an average conversion rate of 3.6%.
- 31 organisations pledging £58,400.
- 828 individuals subscribed to the campaign newsletter.
- Over 30 engagement events held
- Achieving a local social media reach of over 108,000 against a total Swansea population of 230,000.
- Generating wide media coverage including BBC News online, Business News Wales and Wales Online. The South Wales Evening Post featured the campaign five times during the 33 day campaign period and three times in the lead up and afterwards.

Crowdfunder UK Head of Campaigns, Simon Walker said: “The determined Swansea University team quickly mastered the fundamentals of crowdfunding, creating a first-class community-focused campaign which captured the imagination”.

