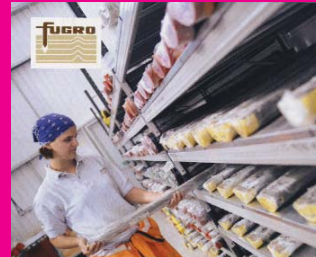




An Ingenious case study

Engineering Engagement



The aim

Engineering Engagement aimed to encourage engineering organisations in the Oxfordshire region to take part in public engagement activities.

The project also wanted to demonstrate how public engagement can be aligned so that it meets company needs and to challenge the idea that engagement is just about passing on information and can be a creative and interactive endeavour.

About the project

Science Oxford manage over 500 Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Ambassadors who regularly visit schools and participate in projects, events and lessons.

Ingenious funding enabled Science Oxford to explore a new way of recruiting engineers for public engagement activities from the 'top down', by getting senior management on board first.

Science Oxford recruited five local engineering companies from personal contacts, mass mailings, a launch event and promotion through the Institution of Civil Engineers. Five companies were selected from the 15 that expressed an interest.

To ensure each public engagement activity was relevant, the first stage was to identify the company's 'need', which turned out to be focused in one of the following areas - public relations, recruitment, continuing professional development or related to corporate social responsibility.

The companies involved then identified a total of 19 engineers to receive training in developing and delivering a public engagement event, activity or resource that could address the identified need.

Training programmes were based on the STEM Ambassador's training scheme, which was adapted according to the activity type and target audience.

Between them the companies developed and delivered three public events (one which was repeated six times) and two career event workshops.

Website resources and promotional materials were also produced to complement the activities.

In one activity Science Oxford worked with Fugro Geoconsulting Ltd, a specialist in earth survey data, which was keen to update its careers and recruitment resources. Engineers from different departments came up with the idea of creating photo diaries to describe "a week in the life of a Fugro engineer".

The participants met with photographers and received guidance from Science Oxford on how the diaries should look to make them appealing to a young audience before the engineers started taking their own photographs. The finished diaries were featured on the careers pages of the company's website and printed as postcards for use at careers events: www.fugro.co.uk/careers/profiles.asp.

"We learned a lot from the project which we will be able to apply elsewhere."

Amanda Nolte, Project Manager

Grant holder:
Organisation:
Funding type:
Activity type:
Level of funding:
Project period:

Dr Amanda Nolte, Head of Innovation
Science Oxford
Ingenious Public Engagement Grant
Communications training for engineers
£29,250
March 2008 to September 2009

How did it go?

As each project progressed, its focus shifted to ensure that the activities met each company's specific need, which was essential to secure their continued buy-in.

Engineering Engagement enabled engineers to explore new ways of communicating with the public. It helped them describe to people what they do in an interesting, visual way and encouraged the engineers to think creatively about their work.

The downside was, with the economic downturn in 2008, recruiting companies to take part in the project was quite difficult.

Best bit?

The project has a lasting legacy past the period of funding, and all the resources are still available and can be utilised again whether as a web pdf, careers leaflets or web casts.

"The photo diaries continue to be used at career events as a talking point to discuss what they [the engineers] do. The projects outcomes were visual and interesting and fitted their [Fugro's] need."

Amanda Nolte, Project Manager

What next?

Three of the organisations taking part in Engineering Engagement had not previously been involved in public engagement. Since taking part in the *Ingenious* project all three have reported that they now have the motivation and confidence to take part in future events of this type:



Fugro has agreed to take part in the Engineering Your Future careers event next year and is keen to continue the photo diaries project; Crown Packaging Plc has expanded the reach of its workshop content by adapting it for an A-Level audience and Regenattec has adapted the materials developed for its public event to create a new website resource – available at <http://www.scienceoxfordlive.com/news/biofuels>

Engineering Engagement activities were:

1. A week in the life of a Fugro engineer

Photo diaries for recruitment information
Fugro Geoconsulting Ltd

2. Careers workshops

Can-design workshop event and development of promotional materials, including a new display stand for careers events
Crown Packaging Plc

3. Rickety rockets

Designing launch pads for rockets
Science and Technology Facilities Council:
Rutherford-Appleton Laboratory (RAL)

4. Bio-fuels workshop

Group discussion event at Science Oxford
Regenattec