

# Northwest Business Environment Awards



## Background:

Mersey Basin Campaign (MBC) wanted to recognise, celebrate and award Northwest businesses, organisations and individuals whose commitment to the environment is central to their business operations.

## The project:

To organise and deliver a high quality awards scheme in order to recognise environmental excellence in Northwest businesses. Businesses were invited to submit a nomination form in order to be considered for one of the awards categories.

The awards fell into five categories: Environmental Innovation; Built Environment; Best Environmental Practice; Sustainable Procurement and Environmental Champions. The steering group handpicked judges for each category based on their knowledge and experience in each area.

Once the winners and runners-up had been decided, high quality trophies and certificates were commissioned and presented at a highly professional and prestigious ceremony held at a quality venue. At the ceremony, short films were shown, giving information on the environmental innovation and excellence of the winning businesses. Tickets for the award ceremony cost £30.

The awards were held annually with improvements and refinements made based on each year's experience.

## How we did it:

- Steering group of partners formed to direct delivery of the awards and select appropriate judging panel for each category.
- Money from sponsors secured.
- Venue and date for ceremony decided.
- Invites produced and sent out to businesses across the Northwest through the media and partners.
- Shortlist of entries compiled and announced.
- Shortlist of entries in each category sent to relevant judging panel for consideration. Judges also went and visited nominated businesses as part of the judging process. Winners and runners-up selected for each category.
- Trophies and certificates commissioned and manufactured.
- Short films made about the nominated businesses that would be shown at the awards ceremony.
- Ticket purchase and delegate registration for the ceremony opened.
- Awards ceremony held with winners receiving trophies and certificates (winners were not informed they had won prior to the ceremony).
- Awards were heavily publicised through a detailed communications plan.



## Publicity:

Creative Concern dealt with all publicity and the awards provided many hooks on which to hang PR opportunities. For example, at the call for entries, at the announcement of the shortlist and when the winners are finally announced, each provided a great opportunity to promote and publicise the event.

Publicity was segmented into regions with press releases about winners in Merseyside sent to all the Merseyside press (same for Lancashire, Cheshire, Greater Manchester and Cumbria). Also, the winners provided an excellent opportunity for case studies which are popular with the press.

## **Project value and funding sources:**

Total project cost for the awards was around £64,000.

Venue costs: £5,300  
Event and post event costs: £7,000  
Filming costs: £18,200  
Project management costs: £5,350  
Advertising cost: £350  
Prizes and certificates: £1450  
PR, design, print and copy: £26,500  
TOTAL: £64,000

## **Who was involved:**

**MBC** – hosts the awards, chairs the steering group and manages their delivery. Manages delegate registration and ticket sales for the awards ceremony.

**NWDA** – co-host and lead sponsor for the awards.

**KTB Events** – provided event management for the awards.

**Creative Concern (communications agency)** – managed the publicity for the awards and designed and produced all printed materials.

**NWBEA Steering Group** – brings together partners, plans and presides over the awards and directs their delivery. Annually considers and selects judges for each category. Includes members from MBC, NWDA, RIBA, Institute of Directors, Envirowise, Groundwork, Envirolink, Enworks, ICE and the Environment Agency.

**Judges** – include members from NWDA, Lancaster Environment Centre, Environment Agency, APEM Ltd, RIBA, Salford City Council, AEA Group, Federation of Small Businesses, Pinsent Masons LLP, Sustainable Procurement Forum, Manchester City Council, Defra, Common Purpose and the Regional Environmental Protection Advisory Committee.

**Sponsors** – provided advice, financial support and helped promote the awards. Includes the Environment Agency, Envirolink, Groundwork, 4NW, RIBA, Enworks, Envirowise, CBI, ICE, Manchester Metropolitan University, Chamber of Commerce East Lancashire, Lancaster University, NWIEP.

## **Lessons learned:**

**Think big!** – there's no need to assume that if you are a small organisation you need to do things on a small scale.

**Consistency** – consistency within the steering group and awards categories helped build the awards identity as well as encouraging entries - shows you know what you're doing.

**Emphasis on quality throughout** – venue, trophies and any printed materials such as leaflets/invitations should all be of a very high standard – helps build identity and credibility.

**Don't award rubbish!** – better not to give out an award in any given year if the standard is poor – you may lose credibility if you just award the least poor.

**Constant improvement** – the awards were constantly tweaked to ensure they were better than previous years without any drastic changes.

**No organisation is an island** – excellent example of partnership working as the awards could not have been delivered by MBC alone.