

Determined to deliver results

The East of England has everything it takes to weather the recession and come out on top

That's the deal with big city PR? Most of us have been there at some point - if not London, then Manchester, Leeds or Birmingham. We learned our trade, decided quality of work and life could be better combined elsewhere - and moved away from urban hell. We didn't leave our brains or our professionalism behind like a pair of discarded socks.

It really galls that some folk can't look beyond an SW1 postcode, yet there's so much fantastic work, a wealth of creativity and some stonking PR professionals outside the M25. We're fortunate enough to have cracking clients who have recognised that many are moving business away from London precisely because they are driven, hungry and determined to deliver oodles of results.

The East of England is an area with great prospects for PR agencies - hence the regular trail of city-based agencies that come fishing for new clients in our little pond. More often than not, though, they leave with a 'one that got away' tale. Does that make us a little smug? Not really, as we should be winning business on our doorstep because we're a quality agency without the hefty London overheads. However, when we scoop up a nice national account, persuading a client to opt for us rather than the glamour of a London 'name', that feels like a win for the whole region.

But back to home-grown opportunities. The East of England has everything it takes to not only weather the recession but come out smelling of muck and roses on the other side. Why? Take the businesses we have on the doorstep.

Agribusiness is huge. Regardless of the economic challenges, people still have to eat. Much of that process begins right here, in some of the richest and most fertile land to which the country can lay claim. That's why we scooped up Chamberlain, the best agricultural agency in the business, a couple of years ago. And we're still tractoring along,



Views in brief

Which regional media outlet do you most respect?

Cambridge Evening News. It has recently refocused to a more traditional regional remit, which fits perfectly with the current climate. People want to read about their home area when the national headlines are so depressing.

Who is the in-house PR person to watch in your region?

Mark Miller, comms and media manager at Cambridgeshire County Council. He keeps the media in the loop while presenting the council in a good light.

What's the best example of great communications you've seen recently?

The T-Mobile flashmob campaign at Liverpool Street station.

with some of the biggest names in agriculture choosing to work with us, not least because they get to tap into decades of experience. We understand their particular challenges and the way they speak - in many ways a completely different language to that used elsewhere in PR (and I don't mean 'Oo-ar, git orf my land').

Next comes healthcare. Cambridge, with its scientific heritage, has birthed some of the best brains in the world. It's been at the forefront of medical break-

throughs for centuries. Some of the most innovative and biggest healthcare companies in the world have a base here. We have people in the agency who can - and do - get their heads around some very complex developments in both pharma and consumer healthcare.

Naturally, there's also the massive hi-tech presence and we have specialists in that area as well. They're well versed in turning complicated language into plain English - and equally

at home talking in dots and digits to those so inclined.

We're strong in b2c and b2b too. So are we a jack of all trades? No, we've become masters of many. We've built up a team of people who can scale that learning curve like a gazelle on steroids, working on toys one minute, analytical software the next, a few chemicals on the side plus complicated financial and legal services, and some animal and human healthcare - all knitted together with a strong dose of enthusiasm and creativity.

Because our PR sits right in the midst of strong digital, branding and advertising teams, we don't have people who stoop to fisticuffs across the boardroom table when it comes to the different disciplines. We know where we can amplify their work and when they can boost ours. It works for us - and our clients.

Kerris Macauley is head of PR at Ware Anthony Rust