

# BACK IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT

## Brand realignment improves residents' satisfaction ratings

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In 2006, Islington Council looked, frankly, a bit of a mess. Residents were telling us they were confused about what services the council provides and their money pays for. And with the council's publicity and the borough's vista displaying a disparate array of ill considered branding, it was no wonder that the council looked at best municipal and, at worst, disorganised.

A brand audit made it easy to understand how this confusion had developed. The brand guidelines were patchy and heavily focused on the logo, leaving departments and contractors at liberty to translate the brand as they wished. Clearly, we needed standards in place in order to improve the public's perception of the council.

To improve the council's reputation with residents, we asked DogStar to develop an easily recognisable style so that residents can identify the council with the services they receive. To make this style something we could action consistently, we also

asked the agency to produce a detailed style guide which clearly explains how to meet the requirements of the brand and helps to facilitate quality design. The refreshed brand retained the elements (for example the logo and the use of green) that residents associated with the council, while updating other attributes to position the council as a modern, approachable, forward thinking organisation, professional and confident. Crucially, the refreshed brand supports the link between service provision and value for money that will ultimately improve the council's reputation.

Staff and management buy-in were key to the success of the brand. In January 2007 an internal campaign took place using the staff newsletter, the intranet, posters, desk calendars and roadshows.

Once staff understood why branding was important they rapidly bought into and complied with the new guidelines.

One resident commented "The council now makes it clear at a glance which services they provide".



By April 2007, 90% of staff knew the brand had been refreshed and 95% knew to speak to the communications team before they commissioned design. One year on, virtually all printed publicity has moved over to the refreshed brand, over 200 vehicles have new livery and around 60 building signs have been updated making it far easier for residents to make the link between the 600 services we provide. Longstanding partners like our waste contractor Enterprise and our education partner CEA have been exemplary at repositioning the council as the service provider.

A new communications partnership policy is ensuring all new and existing contractors position Islington in this central role. Before the brand refresh 33%<sup>1</sup> of residents thought that the council provided value for money, this figure is now 54%<sup>2</sup>.

Resident satisfaction has improved with 72% of residents now saying the council is doing a good job of looking after Islington's environment (compared with 61% in 2005) and 67% believing

that the quality of life of people in Islington is improving (compared with 49% in 2005)<sup>3</sup>.

In terms of perception, nothing is as telling as the following comment from a resident who said "The recycling service is so much better now the people in the big green council trucks are doing it", completely unaware that they are the same crew in a newly branded fleet. So whether reading the council newsletter, visiting our offices, dropping children at school, walking past a recycling truck, browsing the council's website, or sitting in the park, the link between the council services is now far more obvious to residents and the council's reputation has improved as a result.

Footnotes: <sup>1</sup> BVPI 2006 (Ipsos MORI)  
<sup>2</sup> Budget Consultation 2007 (Ipsos MORI)  
<sup>3</sup> Environment and Regeneration Satisfaction Survey 2007 (ORC International).

