

## **A District Council in the East Midlands boosts leisure attendances and brings in extra income to help bring their subsidy of leisure facilities to sustainable levels**

### **North East Derbyshire**

#### Key messages

- Prior to using Sport England's segmentation the service lacked detail of who their target audience was and how to reach it.
- The segmentation was used to develop a marketing plan to provide a greater focus on the customer.

#### Background

- A largely rural district, North East Derbyshire has a population of 100,000.
- Whilst research identifies high levels of citizen satisfaction with leisure services, there are challenges such as childhood obesity, inequality in life expectancy and high prevalence of limiting disability in some areas.
- The aim was twofold: to provide a service better targeted to those who participate less, to reduce health inequalities and secondly, to increase income.



#### What did we do?

- A marketing plan was developed for North East Derbyshire leading to a rebranding of the service into 'Just do More'
- The objective was to get a better understanding of the market and how to reach the different segments within the marketplace.
- The process involved the Elected Members including the Leader of the Council, all Leisure Services staff and corporate colleagues (including the Council's Communications and Media Manager)
- Target groups were established, with the market segments providing vital detail on the characteristics, location and relative size of these groups.
- The nineteen segments were mapped to the area, highlighting the prevalence of each segment, activity levels, and proportion of each segment who want to do more activity, and the preferred channels by which the segments could be contacted.

## What did we do? (continued)

- Families, children and young people, hard-to-reach groups and older people were established as key target groups. Within these groups, particular segments were targeted, such as 'Walking for health' for young mums and older people.
- Market segmentation, alongside low cost digital marketing techniques, enabled highly targeted communication with existing and new customers
- Alongside Sport England's segmentation data, local stakeholder research and local profiling data was also used in developing the marketing plan
- Everything was linked to the 2011-2016 [Corporate plan](#) which impacts directly on local priority setting, with a key focus on 'improving peoples health' and 'ensuring a high performing council'
- North East Derbyshire are working with neighbouring districts authorities and the education sector to further embed use of the segmentation tool.

*'During the toughest financial year in the history of local government we have bucked the national trend for reducing leisure income in spectacular fashion'*

*Councillor Graham Baxter MBE,  
Leader of North-East Derbyshire  
District Council*

*'The use of the tool was pivotal to helping us understand who and where our customers were and then developing our communication channels in the marketing plan to best effect'*

*Mike Blythe, North East Derbyshire  
District Council*

## The results

- Income more than £100,000 up by the end of the 2011/12 financial year (projected).
- Improved customer satisfaction – increased to 92%
- Increase in participation across the board: swimming lessons at almost 80% capacity; 'Walking for Health' participation 50% above target; increase in fitness classes to meet demand; overall facility participation up 18,000 visits in six months (August 11 to January 12 against same period 2010\11).

## Lessons

- Turning data into intelligence was critical to success – by monitoring progress through effective performance frameworks, and drawing on other sources of complementary data and local intelligence.
- Leadership is crucial across Council staff, at all levels, and including Elected Members.

## For more information

- Mike Blythe, Assistant Director, Leisure & Culture, North East Derbyshire District Council

<http://www.ne-derbyshire.gov.uk/>