

TASTE

HOME & GARDEN MARKETING INSIGHT ISSUE 2

ONLINE PR
LET'S GET YOU
CONNECTED!

**OUR INSIGHTS
INTO THE**
*Connected home
Smart gardens*

NEW

**CLIENTS AND
FRESH FACES**

**DIGGING DEEP
TO GROW YOUR
BUSINESS**



ISSUE TWO



DIGGING DEEP TO GROW YOUR BUSINESS

It's been a busy few months since we released the first issue of Taste magazine and we're keen to show you what we've been up to!

This quarter, we're focusing on 'digging deep'. As a specialist agency, we're committed to getting to the very heart of your business and this season has been no different. With a new client win in the smart technology sector, we've been reading up on the connected home and digital living and now we can't wait to share our insights with you.

It's also been an eventful time for the team at Brookes & Co, as our clients' usual trade shows keep coming thick and fast. We've attended Garden Press Event, Spring Fair, Totally Tools, DIY Week Awards, Housewares Innovation Awards and—before we get too comfy—we'll be showing our faces at Solex, BBC Gardeners' World Live, Exclusively Housewares and Exclusively Electrical, with GLEE peeking its nose around the corner too! We hope to catch up with as many of you at these events as possible.

What's more, we've a fresh new face in the office! The lovely Alice Mackey has joined the PR team and will be assisting with online and offline PR and social media for a number of our clients.

We've had some lovely feedback from our clients and friends on Taste issue one and we hope that you enjoy issue two just as much.

Kate

Managing Director of Brookes & Co

THE CONNECTED HOME

How smart technology is changing the way we live

We've all done it; driving off somewhere then worrying—did we lock the door? Is the heating off? Are those hair straighteners about to burn a hole in the bedroom carpet?! It's a horrible feeling which can often spoil a good night out. However, with the advent of the connected home, this could all be a thing of the past! Never ones to shy away from the new and relatively unexplored, we've pulled together our top reasons for getting connected.

A hot new trend

Perhaps one of the first devices most people think of when they hear 'smart home technology' is smart energy. Enabling us all to save on those dreaded energy bills, smart thermostats are replacing old heating systems nationwide.

Smart security

There's nothing worse than coming home to find evidence of a break in. Fortunately, advances in smart security mean that, in the event of suspicious activity, you will be automatically alerted to the situation via your phone, allowing you to respond immediately even if you're out of the country.

No more keys!

Rather than fumbling in bags and under plant pots for bulky key chains, smart technology is taking away the effort and inconvenience of using a key (which you've probably gone and forgotten anyway...) by automatically unlocking your front door as soon as you're within reach. Our tech-

savvy client, ERA is well on the way to launching its new 'Touch Key', which will enable the homeowner to access the property without even having to take their smart phone out of their pocket. Perfect for when you've got your hands full.

With the connected home trend now progressing at full speed, companies are looking into ways to combine smart devices into one super connected hub. It won't be too long before we can open the door, switch on the lights, turn on the heating, flip the kettle into action, and pull up our favourite film on TV....All before we've even got out the car! If we can do all this AND be able to switch off our straighteners, then consider us sold.



STATS FROM MINTEL

With over half of consumers expressing a desire to be better connected in the home, it's clear that the rise in smart technology is having a huge impact on our living habits...

42% of those interested in a smarter home enjoy experimenting with new technology.

5 times as many people are interested in owning a smart smoke detector or heating appliance as the number who own one today.

80% of adults in the UK own a smart phone.

1/3 of UK consumers have a smart TV in their home.

58% of UK consumers cite the top reason for interest in the connected home is to reduce energy bills.



HOW SMART IS YOUR GARDEN?

And we don't mean neat and tidy either!



Smart home technology might be with us already, but following hot on its heels is the equivalent for the garden.

International Home & Housewares Show in Chicago previewed a number of potential applications including the concept of smart, indoor 'microgardens' where integrated LEDs, camera sensors and hydroculture work together to provide optimum light, water and nutrient delivery to guarantee a healthy, abundant crop. These smart growing kits are tipped to be big in the not-too-distant future, enabling gardeners to ignore the vagaries of the UK weather and the voracity of our garden pests!

With kitchen gardens already a popular trend, smart microgardens will provide an accessible alternative, particularly for those who are tight on time and garden space. In fact, the trend for indoor gardening has already started with the emergence of hydroponic kits and growing tents—the smart microgarden is simply a natural extension of this trend.

Already commonplace with commercial growers, smart technology is still in its infancy with domestic gardeners but we think it has huge potential. The garden industry will need to embrace this trend in order to stay one step ahead of consumer demand.

EFFICIENCY

The key to maximising sales



Figures from the latest GfK research reveal that improving our outdoor space is the third most popular home/lifestyle aspiration for consumers (after increasing storage space and improving indoor dimensions/layout), which can only be good news for the garden sector.

But how best to take advantage of this appetite for spending money on the garden? Traditionally, the sales and marketing approach has been all about the consumer's in-store experience, the appeal of the retail environment as a destination and keeping the customer on the premises for as long as possible.

As a means of counteracting the steady march of online purchasing, this approach may have been an understandable one, but, according to GfK, keeping customers on site for longer may not be the best way to increase sales.

In fact, treating online and offline sales as two conflicting channels is not a true reflection of consumer activity—researching in-store, buying on line and vice versa are being increasingly replaced by a more sophisticated combination of both channels, driven by smart phone usage.

Furthermore, just as it is true that the fewer clicks required, the more the consumer spends online, it is also true that the faster the 'bricks and mortar' customer is able to shop, the more they spend in-store too. According to GfK, the key to increasing sales values is improving the efficiency of the 'trip' be that online or offline, so that the entire purchase experience is seamless, simple and speedy.

LET'S GET CREATIVE

Creative Products thought it was a good time to increase their visibility in communicating about the way they work and felt we were the guys to help them do that.

They offer innovative and inspirational kitchen, garden, DIY and houseware utensils and gadgets which they merchandise in a unique way using in-store TV to inspire and inform consumers.

For Spring Fair this year, we sent a series of three personalised postcards over a period of two weeks to key buyers in a bid



One of three personalised A5 mailers

to encourage them to visit the Creative Products stand.

We also organised a number of editor meetings with Housewares and Progressive Housewares magazines at Spring Fair, resulting in some excellent coverage.

Creative Products are big attendees of the main trade shows and we'll be helping them with their marketing at Exclusively, GLEE and Autumn Fair this year.

What's more, they have recently asked us to look at managing

their trade media budget too, so we must be doing something right!

Here's what Richard Booker, Operations Director of Creative Products says about us "With Brookes & Co, I can access a level and diversity of PR and marketing support for far less than the cost of employing an in-house marketing professional"

Good value, that's us!

LOVE THE PLACE YOU'VE GOT

We have been involved with this super initiative to encourage people, particularly 30-45 year olds, to get back in touch and in love with their outdoor spaces, be they substantial plots or a simple window box.

It would appear that, what with falling levels of home ownership and the ever-increasing demands on our time, the garden area has been a bit neglected of late!

We encouraged our client, Grange to become a partner in the scheme and we think it's fair to say that the company has benefited greatly in terms of consumer coverage via press, e-newsletters, web and social media channels. In fact, we have had a number of our other clients asking about potential involvement going forward!

Give us a shout if you want to know more about it.

A NEW ERA FOR THE AGENCY



We are delighted to have recently been appointed by home security specialist ERA to handle the company's communications and PR business. Perhaps best known for its traditional locks, ERA is moving more into electronic home

security products, including a new 'Touch Key' device, a smart alternative to the conventional lock, enabling the user to remotely operate the lock using a phone app. Clever eh?

Initially, we will be helping to promote distributor business with builders' merchants, multiple retail and independent DIY stores, with plans for a consumer campaign later in 2017.

We are really excited that yet another leading brand has seen fit to 'unlock our potential'.

DOWN WITH THE KIDS IN THE BIG APPLE



Students and staff with Bandujo folk

In the last issue of Taste, we mentioned an upcoming working trip to New York by two members of our team and a link up with Manhattan based creative and digital agency, Bandujo Advertising and Design.

The connection was the joint affiliation with Staffordshire University's BA Honours Advertising and Brand Management course (Account Director, Sam Owen is also an Associate Industry lecturer at the University).

Each year, the students undertake a 'real life' creative assignment and for the past 12 years, Bandujo has provided the brief for, and the verdict on, this important project. This year the brief was to devise a campaign to improve the recruitment of ethnic minorities into the NYPD and Sam, along with our Client Services Director, Michèle Rastall, accompanied the five teams of students to New York to present their creative solutions to senior staff at Bandujo.

One of the teams included Brookes & Co's own student intern, Beth Johnson, who told us, "This kind of insight into the real creative agency world is invaluable and it has

undoubtedly helped me to land a full time post with a London-based marketing agency."

Sam said, "This was a fantastic opportunity for everyone involved and we are both delighted and proud that Brookes & Co are working with Staffordshire University to help provide course input, work experience and initiatives such as this one with Bandujo."



▲ Winning work from student Rhiannon Jones with her educational 'Make the Change' campaign.



NEED A HAND
WITH ONLINE PR
AND MARKETING
HAPPY TO HELP



Let's get you connected to online PR!

Google Search

I'm Feeling Lucky

With many of us spending more time online than ever before, PR pros and marketers have had to adapt their techniques to reach their audiences. If you're feeling hesitant about joining the online conversation, check out these top tips for digital success:



WHAT'S THE STORY

Think of online PR as an extension of traditional PR. Despite their differences, at the core of both disciplines is the story. Whether you're blogging, tweeting, writing for print or speaking to a journalist face to face, content is key. Don't get fazed by digital lingo and tech etiquette—if you've got a good story, you're halfway there.



POWER OF JOURNALISM

Whilst the buzz of online PR is growing louder every day, it's important to keep in mind the power of traditional journalism. Not only will a journalist position your story in print but 76% of journalists agree that they also think about a story's potential for sharing online (Bentobox Media). In many cases, it is now becoming common-place for media outlets to feature stories both online and offline.



GET SOCIAL

A staggering 75% of consumers use social media as part of the buying process (Biznology), with 49% of users regularly sharing online content with friends and family (BerlArt). Despite this, only 48% of marketers believe that analysing social media engagement can help improve the overall communication strategy (eMaketer)... Perhaps it's time we all looked again at the power of social media!



DON'T GO SOLO WITH SEO

Search Engine Optimisation plays a huge role in successful online PR but it can be a minefield that drives even the most tech-savvy marketing managers to tears. Invest time with a SEO specialist who can help drive your website and online content to the top of the list.



INTO THE DIGITAL JUNGLE; WHEN BHETA MET AMAZON

BHETA's recent networking forum at the Ricoh arena attracted over 325 delegates from across the DIY, garden and housewares industries and naturally, as BHETA's marketing agency, the team from Brookes & Co were there, keeping up to date with the latest E-commerce trends as well as offering advice to delegates on all things marketing.

Insights from the experts

A packed house at the Ricoh heard from online retail giant, Amazon, about plans to expand with additional suppliers and how they are working with BHETA to build a proactive 'creating value together' relationship. Equally exciting was a presentation by leading omni-channel distributor, Decco, outlining the opportunities for delegates given that 80% of its turnover is in home and garden products.

Traditional v. online shopping

Perhaps one of the most interesting outcomes from the BHETA forum came from Daniel Fearnley, Head of Home at market research company, GfK, who

outlined the latest data on both online retail and the consumer shopping journey in general. He demonstrated that, whereas online shopping is increasingly important and set to grow further, for the home and garden sector, traditional shopping methods remain a significant choice for consumers.

So what did we think of it?

The speakers were keen to work in a mutually supportive manner and offered some interesting insights into consumer trends and habits. There were great networking opportunities for delegates too. Our MD, Kate, says "The event was both enjoyable and informative and all the delegates we spoke to felt it had been a very worthwhile event. I think everyone came away with extended knowledge and perhaps the one thing of particular importance was the research that suggests omni-channel shopping, particularly for certain products in the home and garden sector, is still very significant".

OFFICE COLUMN

The latest Brookes office gossip

From Mac Wizard to King of the Mountains



Our resident Designer and keen amateur cyclist, Robert Sturgess, has been notching up the practice miles for this year's L'Étape du Tour, an organised mass participation event that allows amateur cyclists to race over the same route as a Tour de France stage.

The greatest cycling challenge of his life, the L'Étape du Tour course stretches a staggering 110 miles and crams in two mountain climbs, with a summit finish at the Col d'Izoard, reaching a dizzy height of 7,742ft.

To round the season off, Rob will cycle his first Velo Birmingham festival, a 100 mile closed road sportive in September.

Good luck Rob!



Say hi to Alice!

In the wake of some exciting new business gains and an ever-burgeoning workload, Alice Mackey has joined the wonderland that is Brookes & Co as Junior PR Account Executive.

Alice joins us having spent the last year learning the ropes in the agency world and brings a wealth of digital marketing knowledge as well as traditional copywriting skills.

Alice says she is delighted to be joining a team so clearly committed to supporting its clients. We say, welcome aboard Alice, it will be busy, but fun!



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Why not visit the website at www.brookesandco.net or check out our live Twitter feed @Brookes_Co.

To find out how we can help you, speak to Kate by calling 01889 598600 or email kate@brookesandco.net



Brookes & Co

We love marketing your sector