World Summit Water Success – creating a buzz, educating stakeholders

Introduction

Mistral provided communications support for a Department for International Development (DIFD) sponsored stand in the WaterDome, an event at the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD).

The stand brought together global networks – including OASIS, WELL, Business Partners for Development (BPD) and Partners for Water and Sanitation (PAWS) – advising governments, NGOs and international agencies on water issues.

Objectives

- Raising the awareness of DFID and its work
- Educating stakeholders on the issues of water resource and sanitation in developing countries.

Strategy

With over 100 organisations represented by the networks, Mistral advised that an umbrella brand should be created to focus communications and create a single voice. Mistral recommended 'Knowledge Pool', drawing on the key value of collaborative information-sharing, as well as linking the networks to water.

Mistral planned and implemented an intensive media relations campaign both before and at the WaterDome.

In Johannesburg, Mistral secured daily agenda-setting interviews for Knowledge Pool spokespeople on the Summit radio station, as well as daily press briefings with journalists from across the world, including Africa and Asia.

Results

The campaign successfully shared information on water resources and sanitation with media in developing countries. It is estimated that through the media coverage, over 15 million people heard about Knowledge Pool in Africa alone – a key objective.

Visitors on the stand included the Secretary of State for International Development, Clare Short; the Minister of State for the Environment, Michael Meacher; Wales' First Minister, Rhodri Morgan; ministers from other countries; and the WWF Earth Champions.

A new name has been established in the international water sector. Reports from the event said that Knowledge Pool was the 'hub of discussion' in the WaterDome, the initiative's branding was 'everywhere' and even that some other exhibitors were unhappy about the high level of exposure it received!

> *"Mistral delivered far more than we had hoped for. It is brilliant how Mistral has been a seamless part of the team."*
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> *Rob Flavin*
> *Head of Communications*
> *Centre for Ecology and Hydrology*