

Case Study **National Institute of Agricultural Botany (NIAB) Fellowship Scheme – re-brand and re-launch**

Introduction

NIAB is a charitable plant sciences organisation which provides technical research and consultancy services to its stakeholders. The institute occupies a unique position in the knowledge-based economy due to its ability and commitment to use science in its broadest sense to deliver practical benefits to agriculture.

The subscription-based NIAB Fellowship Scheme is aimed at channelling advice about plant varieties and seeds to farmers and the agricultural industry as a whole. With 3500 farmer members there was capacity to increase a membership and to improve the uptake of advice on new varieties and seeds in the arable sector.

Objective

- Raise the awareness of NIAB and its work
- Increase the member-base of the NIAB Fellowship Scheme.

Strategy

With the aid of DTI Sector Challenge funding, we proposed to re-brand the Fellowship Scheme, launch the NIAB Association and double membership through a comprehensive three-year marketing and PR campaign. This would assist in achieving a more rapid introduction of improved crop varieties and quality with better disease resistance, and in turn lead to environmental and economic benefits.

We wrote, presented and executed a detailed campaign for NIAB, which included:

- Launch of the re-branded membership scheme, which required a high profile press conference in London and included presentations from key speakers on the importance of technology transfer
- Farmer focus groups to identify the target audiences to assist in highly-effective and targeted direct mail. The message 'profit through variety choice' was used to promote technology transfer as the key to future farm profit
- Launch of Landmark – a new upgraded fellowship newsletter to reflect the benefits to members. The style was based on the client's existing logo to give a strong corporate link, and this attracted advertising revenue to support production
- NIAB attendance at major arable events to promote the uptake of new seed varieties
- Internet and range selling to add value and exclusivity to the NIAB Association.

Results

At the end of the campaign membership numbers were up 10 per cent on the previous year and subscription rates increased by 30 per cent. The objectives were achieved and targets exceeded, with a significant increase in subscription revenue.

Additional projects

In addition to the above, we have undertaken a number of projects for NIAB including:

- Increasing awareness of its Labtest service to farmers and the agritrade through range selling, brochure copywriting, and media relations
- Successful re-brand of its Vegetable Advisory Scheme (NIAB VAS).

