



Getting Sage into the local media

Initial situation and objective

IT decisions in medium sized businesses are often initiated and made by managing directors and company owners rather than IT experts – a challenge that has been placed before Sage Software GmbH. As a provider of accounting and business software solutions and services for small and medium-sized enterprises, Sage would like to address precisely this target group.

The presence in regional and national newspapers and the business press is of crucial importance for Sage because these are the publications which are read by local small and medium-sized business owners. It was necessary to find a way of getting into the regional media in order to generate additional awareness for Sage and position the company as an opinion leader with local competence. Regional media will only report on a B2B IT company if it has direct local relevance. So Sage and Schwartz Public Relations successfully launched the Sage Investment Atlas ITC campaign.

Strategy

The strategy consisted of generating an IT topic with both overall economic relevance and a strong local focus, and then to link it to Sage and the SME target groups. The Sage Investment Atlas ITC satisfied these criteria. Based on postal code zones (criterion "regional focus"), the annual investment budgets of small and medium-sized enterprises (criterion "target group focus") for IT and telecommunications equipment (criterion "IT relevance") were surveyed to provide a German investment map (criterion "overall economic relevance").

Description

In order that the management show necessary neutrality, Sage commissioned an independent market research institute for the data collection for "Sage Investitions-Atlas ITK". Subsequently, the results were revised for the campaign by the agency:

1. The national focus was established in the first step by creating a press release containing a general evaluation of the overall investment situation in Germany. This press release was distributed to national media as well as economic and IT trade press.

2. Regional focus: in order to enable targeted communication to all regional target media, the agency developed a database. Each region and federal state was given a national ranking in the database. These were then evaluated to see whether they were above or below the national average and then compared with each other. A qualitative evaluation of the results was then also performed. The agency could therefore process the data in such a way so that the local media was only addressed with information that was relevant for their region. In this way, 87 regional distribution lists were compiled to ensure targeted distribution. To increase coverage in advertising newspapers, Sage also used a press & media services provider to distribute the content on a region-specific basis.

Results

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The press releases about the Investment Atlas led to an overwhelming increase in journalist enquiries directly after they had been distributed. The media echo was equally high in regional newspapers, local radio and TV stations and the specialist press. Overall, the Investment Atlas generated coverage which exceeded expectations by far. Only a short time after the 87 regional press releases had been distributed, 60 online publications were counted.

Several news agencies published reports. In the month of distribution alone, over 160 regional print media as well as national newspapers and specialised media provided coverage of the survey. In the following months there were countless further publications. The number of page impressions on the Sage website's press section increased by 61.2% at the time of distribution. Overall, the Investment Atlas is the most successful Sage PR campaign in recent years.