

CASE STUDY

Creating a consistently positive reputation in a vital vertical sector – Mantis and Stone Group

Often, our clients have burgeoning business in multiple sectors, but have their roots in one in particular. When that's the case, it's just as important to maintain a clear message amongst the bedrock stakeholders as it is to reach out to the new.

One such client for Mantis is Stone Group, a technology services provider to the public sector, with very strong roots in education. A Mantis client for four years, the team has achieved some significant successes supporting Stone Group's evolution from hardware manufacturer of computers for education, to infrastructure and services provider to the wider public sector.

During that time, a consistent part of the campaign has been to work with the education media, including the specific publications that cover primary and secondary education, higher and further education, trade and national.

BUILDING A REPUTATION AND KEEPING IT CONSISTENT

Mantis has built Stone Group a reputation amongst the education trade media as an interesting, punctual, original provider of content that can be relied upon to fire reader's imagination.

We've spent time analysing what the journalists need to make a story popular, and worked with them to create pieces which have lasting impact on both the reader, and the magazine's readership figures and social shares.

We've established Stone Group as the technology provider that can source and deliver a school or university case study that is front-page material. Through the high calibre of this consistent customer campaign, we've ensured that Stone Group is now considered to be an influencer, not a 'just a vendor' – Stone's opinion on issues that affect education now matters, and is respected.

SNAPSHOT OF MANTIS' RESULTS FOR STONE GROUP IN EDUCATION

- 27 pieces of coverage in 2015 so far in the education sector, averaging four pieces per month
- An average of four placements for each education customer story in education and public sector focused titles
- Four cover features in print magazines
- Two or more pieces of coverage in every issue of Education Technology, University Business and Teach Secondary magazine for the last 12 months
- Feature columns on topics from infrastructure storage in schools to digital safeguarding
- Influence relations including a privately held roundtable attended by seven third-sector organisations and NGOs, and a meeting with Ofsted's head of technology, David Brown

WHAT DO THE EDUCATION MEDIA SAY ABOUT MANTIS?

Helen Mulley, the editor of Teach Secondary and Technology and Innovation told us, "Following an extremely successful meeting at Bett 2014, I have found Stone to be a useful source of unbiased and relevant advice for secondary schools throughout the year.



Working with Mantis is a pleasure: briefs are clearly understood and realised, copy – when required – is stylish and engaging, communication is effective, and deadlines are met. There is a good deal of trust in our relationship, which means that Stone is currently high on my list of companies to approach when I need comment or case studies.”

UNDERSTANDING THE EDUCATION SECTOR'S MEDIA – THE MANTIS TEAM'S TOP TIPS

Eleanor Willock, director at Mantis recommends, “Because not all teachers are technologists, and similarly, not everybody who works in education is employed to teach, the media that deals with education is varied in composition and focus on technology. The common factor is that the education media have a need for real life stories where schools, colleges and universities can talk about how they are using technology to make a lasting difference. Therefore, we've made customer stories the absolutely essential PR tool that underpins the rest of Stone Group's campaign.”

Anna Hennessy, director at Mantis adds, “In our experience, the education sector practices a culture of sharing when it comes to positive outcomes, schools often visit other schools to see first hand how a technology investment makes a difference, and there's a lot of communication online and through various media which perpetuates that way of learning. We create stories that encourage this, and when it comes to Stone Group's strategy for large events like BETT, we facilitate meaningful meetings and interactions between Stone, their customers, and influencers, to really make a difference.”

Bryony Cox, consultant at Mantis confirmed, “With Ofsted inspections beginning with a Google search before even setting foot on a school's grounds, positive media coverage is being actively sought by schools which have used technology successfully. Enabling Stone Group to help its customers build up a positive digital reputation is, in turn, facilitating a great deal of trust between Stone and its customers.”

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