



Appointed to handle internal communications for the Learning and Skills Council in the Black Country, Mark Conway, and his company HRO'C soon broadened its work for this public sector organisation to include the launch of major external learning initiatives aimed at the 14 - 19 agenda as well as adult learning and the improvement of college performance in the sub-region.

The quality of work carried out and the results achieved quickly led to HRO'C and Mark being appointed to handle similar work for other LSC organisations in the West Midlands including Shropshire, Birmingham and Staffordshire for whom several major learning and skills pilot schemes were launched.



HRO'C provided all marketing communications support for the launch of train2gain pilot initiatives across the West Midlands as well as handling the national launch for the Department for Skills.

In addition to major launch events featuring celebrities including Gary Lineker, Ruby Wax, Frank Skinner and Phil Tufnell, HRO'C also produced newsletters, and full, through-the-line marketing communications campaigns as well as organising major awards ceremonies and skills conferences.



Originally called 'skills4growth' in Shropshire, the train2gain initiative there was the most successful in the UK in terms of numbers of participants – companies and learners – and the work carried out by HRO'C, led by Mark Conway, established templates for the national roll-out.



HRO'C even carried out employee training on behalf of the LSC Shropshire to ensure maximum success for all sales visits in the largely rural county where target employers were widely geographically dispersed.

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"I didn't score 48 goals for England without training."

**news4you** Issue 1 Spring 2004

**Lineker challenges Shropshire to "Go for it"**

Over 3000 courses available

2000 people already in training

Free employee training benefiting your business

Benefits to the employer

The Black Country LSC's 'Get On' campaign was designed to encourage young people to revisit their basic skills in order to be more attractive to potential employers. It was led by former England cricketer and 'King of the Jungle' Phil Tufnell and proved highly successful in the Black Country.



**Do reading, writing and numbers leave you stumped?**

Phil Tufnell

It does not have to be that way.  
For free help and advice with reading, writing or numbers in the Black Country area, call us on 0800 444 290.

Don't give up. **get on**

The success of work carried out for the LSC organisations in Birmingham, The Black Country, Shropshire and Staffordshire, led to Mark's team being appointed to launch and promote a West-Midlands-wide basic skills initiative called Bite-Size:



Frank Skinner, helicoptered around the region and participating in short, bite-size courses in each location, was also followed by two TV crews and resulted in wall-to-wall coverage on all media outlets for an entire day:

**The Launch Event**

The launch event needed to produce local as well as regional media coverage and it also needed to ensure that each of the 3 local LSCs received the same amount of reporting attention. To secure this Bite Size set a target that each of these organisations, HPTC adopted a multi-venue approach by holding an event in each of the 3 LSC regions.

HPTC flew Frank Skinner by helicopter to six locations across the Midlands on 10 May 2005. At each venue, Frank was challenged to learn a skill that was available as a bite size intro course. Frank learnt judo in Birmingham, Sailing in Coventry, pottery in Warwick, drumming in Northampton, bagpipe in Newcastle-under-Lyme and football skills in Wolverhampton before returning to Birmingham for a last-minute headline.

HPTC managed the launch right through from the planning process to actually managing each of the venues on the day. This included researching and arranging appropriate venues in each of the 3 locations, organising catering, technical equipment, helicopters and transport, booking photographers, planning the schedule for the day as well as working with the LSC and the learning providers who would be teaching Frank each of his skills.

As securing high-profile media coverage was the main objective of the launch event, media features formed a big part of HPTC's activity. Prior to the event, HPTC produced press releases providing information on Frank's challenges and the Bite Size intro campaign. Key journalists and photographers were invited to the event and coordinated with journalists from key press. TV and radio were arranged.

In order to secure broadcast media coverage, HPTC negotiated with the BBC and Central Television to have camera crews following Frank throughout the day. As part of the negotiations with the BBC, permission was given for BBC radio stations to also arrange, in addition, six live-to-air local commercial radio stations. The live and session FM provided wrap-up sets for the two public events in Coventry city centre and funded shipping cards.

On the day, HPTC was responsible for managing the media in attendance, ensuring that they had all of the relevant information and the live blog tracked with Frank, Frank's responses and images were shared to all media who were unable to attend the events.

We also developed above the line creative for the LSC Birmingham and Solihull for its 'Gremlins' campaign



In addition to celebrity endorsement, HRO'C also organised and produced comprehensive public reports on a major annual skills conference attended by many of the leaders of the UK skills sector; a regular newsletter for the Black Country Partnership for Care, as well as internal and external newsletters for the LSC Black Country, Shropshire, Staffordshire and Birmingham and Solihull.

