



Success Story: Innovate UK

How a government agency promotes 300 events annually and exceeds engagement targets

[Innovate UK](#), a government agency that supports science and technology innovation across the UK, wanted to increase brand awareness and showcase their various offerings.

Discover how they banded together to promote 300 business-related events and drove 30% more engagement than their target on the annual flagship event.

About Innovate UK

Innovate UK is the UK's innovation agency. It works with people, companies, and partner organisations to find and drive the science and technology innovations that will grow the UK economy. The agency delivers productivity, new jobs and exports, and keeps the UK globally competitive in the race for future prosperity.



30%

greater engagement over target goal around their flagship event



50%

of event engagement by people who did not attend the event in-person



Grew followers from zero to 3,220 in 4 months for its flagship event Innovate UK 2014



What They Did

Innovate UK's mission is to attract and provide support for innovative enterprises across the UK. To support this mission, the organisation's communications goals are to increase brand awareness and educate customers on the various services they have to offer.

A key tactic is to promote some 300 business-related events, such as workshops, conferences, and competitions, across the country and secure registrations and sign-ups. The largest and most significant event is the annual flagship Innovate UK event.

Marketing in a cost effective manner without advertising (social or otherwise) for that many events was a huge logistical challenge. And with so many conversations revolving around various events and across different social channels, the communication team struggled to identify and engage in the most relevant and valuable conversations. The result was that connections were often made independently of the organisation and Innovate UK missed out on valuable opportunities to promote events, attract businesses, or provide support.

They needed an effective way to find and listen to relevant conversations and to engage with business owners and key influencers to promote event marketing.

"Hootsuite is essential for our internal collaboration—we are now working well together and have had huge success in increasing the number of staff that are actively engaged due to better understanding the value of social media for our organisation."

Peter Wilson, Digital Communications Manager, Innovate UK



How They Did It

To ensure they were able to identify, monitor, and join the right conversations, and to leverage social media for event marketing, Innovate UK uses Hootsuite.

Awareness

By setting up listening streams in Hootsuite using keyword and hashtag searches, the team could narrow-in on conversations taking place around specific events. Once they understood what was being shared by customers and around different events, they could start scheduling the right content for the right audience.

Education and collaboration

Education and training were vital in bringing other teams and individuals from the organisation along the digital journey. Innovate UK trained and brought 25 people into one centralised Hootsuite dashboard, so that specific questions and enquiries could be assigned for the best and quickest responses. This allowed for confident, secure collaboration across several social channels by many stakeholders in the organisation.

Engagement

Having learned from strategic listening and best practice training, the team could collaborate to engage in the right social conversations and help drive awareness to events and offerings. This allowed them to connect in meaningful one-on-one dialogues as the workload was more balanced.





Advocacy

Innovate UK uses social media for advocacy to aid recruitment, share and promote success stories, and invite customers to speak at events. They can also identify advocates they weren't already aware of and build relationships with them directly.

Promoting keynote speakers is a key driver for registration numbers, but there are sometimes up to 30 different speakers on one day for an event. Hootsuite Scheduler to organise marketing—based on location, time, and content—for that many speakers helps save time and resources.

Since using Hootsuite, event marketing and promotion has been a huge success. For example, Innovate UK now has an effective and cost-efficient way to promote their events to a much larger, amplified audience.

“We are increasingly operating like a Social Enterprise and are future-proofed to scale according to our ongoing growth.”

Peter Wilson, Digital Communications Manager, Innovate UK



The Results

Each year Innovate UK runs its flagship event called Innovate UK. For the 2014 flagship event, they used Hootsuite to help exceed their target goal for engagement around the event by 30%.

One of the ways they boosted engagement was by establishing the event-branded hashtag #InnovateUK14 to foster a community of like-minded individuals, entrepreneurs, and innovators. Surprisingly, approximately 50% of all social media mentions were by non-attendees who were tracking and following trending conversations from the event. This demonstrates the value that Innovate UK provides their audience and to those unable to attend the event.

This event was sold out in advance and teams were still responding to tweets and enquiries about ticket availability right up to the launch of the event. By making their communications more tailored, personal, and relevant to the audience, they saw a significant increase in engagement.

On the first day of the event, #InnovateUK14 was the sixth highest trending term in the UK on Twitter. These are some other topline social media metrics from the event:

- Total new followers: 3,220 from a zero base
- Total mentions of the event: 1,538
- Total Retweets: 1,130

Beyond the flagship event's success, Innovate UK is now able to effectively promote 300 small business events in a cost-effective manner. They're now using social media to help drive event registrations, build brand awareness, and educate customers on their services.

"Innovate UK is fast realising its ambition to become one of the best examples of a mature approach to social media across government agencies."

Peter Wilson, Digital Communications Manager, Innovate UK