

Entering new markets with furniture manufacturer

A specialist seating manufacturer has harnessed the power of public relations to connect and engage with new markets following a strategic campaign carried out by Bridge PR & Media Services.

Repose Furniture is a family-run business with an impressive track record of manufacturing high quality products using traditional and innovative methods of design and production. Although well established as a manufacturer of high quality specialist seating within its distributor networks, the company recognised it needed to raise its profile among consumers and end users in the healthcare and home care markets, as well as among occupational therapists and care home decision makers.



Making the industry sit up and listen: When looking to establish its presence within new markets, Repose Furniture Limited enlisted the experience of Bridge PR & Media services to really propel the business forward.

At a glance

Objectives:

- To position Repose as an industry leader within the health, care, and home sectors.
- To raise the company's profile among key decision makers within the Occupational Therapy and Care home sectors.
- Working with a well-known personality to provide credible medical knowledge on a number of key healthcare issues

Challenges:

- Reaching Repose's target audiences both online and offline.
- Maintaining the Repose brand within a heavily saturated market place, while successfully entering new key markets.

Results and benefits:

- Achieving over £14,000 worth of press coverage in key publications.
- Two double page spreads in two key care home sector publications.
- Repose successfully positioned as a leader within the Occupational Therapy and care home markets.
- Generating a highly targeted social media campaign to complement PR. This saw Repose gain over 300 active Twitter followers, and the company's social media presence is still growing.

Taking a strategic approach to PR and marketing

New market entry can be difficult, even when a company has a strong presence in similar markets. You need to build a level of trust with new audiences and introduce them to your brand. In order to build this level of trust Bridge spent time strategically positioning Repose as a thought leader; bringing some of the company's rich healthcare expertise and showcasing this in front of new audiences. The company provided advice, comment, and knowledge transfer on healthcare issues into targeted publications to demonstrate its expertise in the issue, and the work and design that goes into the company's products. This proved particularly popular for Arthritis Care Week held annually in September, with Repose receiving extensive coverage including front page editorial coverage in *Practice Management Magazine*.

The appointment of Dr Hilary Jones

To further aid brand visibility, Repose appointed Dr Hilary Jones as its expert healthcare advisor. Dr Hilary Jones was used as the face of several key campaigns. Using his healthcare expertise and established media presence, Repose was able to offer credible medical advice on a number of healthcare issues, which concern seating and mobility. Repose, together with Dr Hilary, positioned healthcare and seating issues high on the agenda of providers within the healthcare, care home, and individual user market place; with healthcare issues relating to mobility, disability, palliative care, and comfort. By using Dr Hilary as the spearhead for a number of the company's PR and marketing campaigns, Repose achieved over £14,000 in coverage over a 12 month period, measured on the traditional Advertising Cost Equivalent (ACE) model.



Working with a celebrity: Repose appointed TV personality, Dr Hilary Jones as its Expert Healthcare Advisor.

In order to further advance Repose's position as an industry leader, the company produced a number of online marketing resources with Dr Hilary, addressing healthcare issues. The resources provide users with guides to correct posture while seating, combining exercise advice together with lifestyle tips.

The resources are free to download, with a hard copy also accompanying every Repose chair sold. By providing users with this informative reading material, Repose empowered knowledge transfer, not only between themselves and end users, but also between a number of healthcare professionals, such as Occupational Therapists, and the company's wider distributor network.

Forming relationships

Media relations played an integral role in ensuring Repose gained visibility in key publications. Working to establish relationships with relevant journalists and publishers in Repose's key press ensured that on a number of occasions, journalists approached Repose with editorial opportunities, instead of Repose constantly seeking out the reporters themselves.

Are your residents sitting comfortably? If not they may be adding further pressures to your care staff

It is not just your residents that are affected by poor seating. Care staff are also affected. If your residents are sitting in uncomfortable chairs, they will be more likely to get up and move around, which can be tiring for your care staff. This can lead to increased staff turnover and reduced care quality.

Repose's specialist seating solutions are designed to provide maximum comfort and support for your residents. Our chairs and sofas are ergonomically designed to reduce the risk of pressure sores and other health issues. They are also easy to move and store, making them a practical choice for care homes.



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Engaging directly with customers and prospects

As a long established seating manufacturer, with over 100 years combined experience of the industry, Repose already had working relationships with a number of key industry professionals, including distributors, healthcare professionals, and some care home personnel. In order to maintain these relationships effectively, regular contact was needed. Digital newsletters were created, ensuring that relevant content was distributed to the relevant sectors. This allowed content to be highly informative, alerting recipients of news, issues and products that could specifically benefit Repose's key partners and existing customers. E-newsletters complemented the wider PR and marketing campaign and conveyed consistent messages to further enhance the position of the Repose brand. As a result of highly targeted e-newsletters the company enjoyed an open rate of 24% on average.

To further engage with the company's customers and prospects Repose also embarked on an extensive social media campaign, using a variety of social media platforms to effectively reach and actively engage with multiple audiences. The company's social media efforts complemented wider PR and marketing activity, and encouraged conversation between key figures within the company's specific target sectors, generating hundreds of Twitter followers.

Supporting the sales strategy

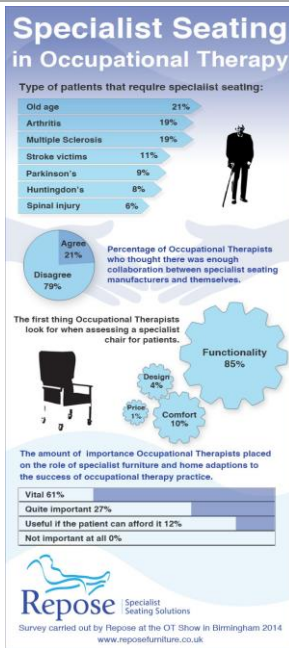
A key focus of Repose's sales strategy is attendance at national trade show exhibitions, which enables the company to showcase its products in front of an attentive audience.

Providing sound advice: Together with Dr Hilary Jones, Repose was able to contribute on a number of medical issues affecting its target audience.

This enabled Repose to provide in-depth knowledge on a number of specific seating and healthcare issues, which further aided the company's market position as a credible industry leader.

An example of this is *Churchill Living Retirement*, a publication that approached Repose with an invitation to offer healthcare advice to its readers. By gaining an extended presence in publications such as Churchill Living Retirement, Repose was able to start building its brand presence in new markets, complementing internal growth plans.

The Churchill publication is distributed to over 57,000 readers within its care home network, from both end users to care home professionals. Exposing the Repose brand here ensured that the company was positioned as an industry leader offering credible advice to a pre-established market, which included a high proportion of prospective customers.



Creating unique content: Repose engaged directly with its target audience to create innovative and original content. With first hand statistics, this made great press content.

Bridge helped Repose to capitalise on its exhibition status in order to really take advantage of visitor numbers. For example, during the Occupational Therapy Show, Repose randomly surveyed a number of Occupational Therapists on a variety of seating issues. This data was then used as the basis for an informative infographic, which was distributed to a number of media outlets within the Occupational Therapy and healthcare sectors. The post OT show campaign enabled Repose to continue to offer insight into the occupational therapy industry, providing unique and informative content to a highly targeted audience. An infographic was selected as the best medium to use as it visually conveys high levels of data in an attractive way. The infographic featured a number of statistics which made it popular with journalists, and which also had an impact on readers.

Infographics also lend themselves well to sharing via social media, engaging audiences while also driving web traffic. Infographics also work to position brands as thought leaders due to the high levels of research they require beforehand.

As a result of adopting a highly strategic PR campaign Repose received over £14,000 worth of coverage. The company has also formed a number of on-going relationships with journalists, key health care professionals, and respected industry bodies, notably within the Occupational Therapy sector. This has led to mutually beneficial relationships and Repose has been able to gain extended coverage in a number of targeted vertical markets, such as the care home sector, where Repose, together with Dr Hilary formed ongoing relationships with one of the country's largest care home providers. By using a combination of traditional and digital based PR and marketing Repose has gained visibility in key market sectors with each mode of communication complementing the other. Social media has proved key to strengthening a number of these relationships, with the brand actively engaging with its audience as well as contributing to a number of key industry discussions.

"We have been working with Bridge since 2013, and the results have been dramatic. Over this period we have achieved over 40% growth, attributable to our encompassing marketing strategy, a significant part of which is PR."

**Keith Fairhurst,
Repose Furniture Limited**