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'Hear My Story': an evaluation of a project to promote Occupational Therapy as a career

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Occupational Therapy continues to be one of the less well known or understood professions in the UK health and social care sectors. The aim of the project was to raise public awareness of occupational therapy as a career option and increase the expressions of interest to study occupational therapy.

This paper evaluates a campaign which placed occupational therapy as a profession "in front" of the wider public alongside informing those who are already interested and actively seeking a career in occupational therapy.

Video personal narratives were produced to highlight occupational therapy student and graduate profiles. Students in the video talked about their University and practice-based learning and graduates spoke about their practice experience. A personal recommendation approach using video case studies of current students and occupational therapists in practice was used in the project to give greater emphasis and credibility to the campaign (Craig et al 2001). The campaign also included non-traditional visual images of occupational therapy which would hopefully attract a more heterogeneous pool to the profession (Craig & Mitchell 2003).

The project used Web 2.0 technologies and a dedicated presence on social networking sites and social media marketing to publicise the 'Hear my Story' videos (Facebook, Twitter and an Internet virtual world). Applicants obtained information by sending a text to an enquiry line.

The results demonstrated a significant increase in suitable applicants to the occupational therapy course in comparison to the previous year. The paper will demonstrate the effectiveness of the campaign and how it has met its aims giving quantitative data from Web 2.0 technologies, recruitment day attendance, suitable applicants for the course and qualitative feedback gathered at the recruitment event.

In conclusion, this paper will be of interest to those who want to devise a model of practice and create a template for a successful marketing campaign.

Craig C, Gissane C, Douthwaite J, Philip E (2001) 'The Career Choice of First-Year Occupational Therapy Students': *British Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 64(3) 114-127

Craig, C, Mitchell S (2003) 'Careers Advisers' Opinions of the College of Occupational Therapists' Careers Video: *British Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 66(12) 571-574