

The Cat's Whispers

From Red Cat Communications

Winter 2009

Credit crunch flavours public health report

How relevant will your annual report be this year?

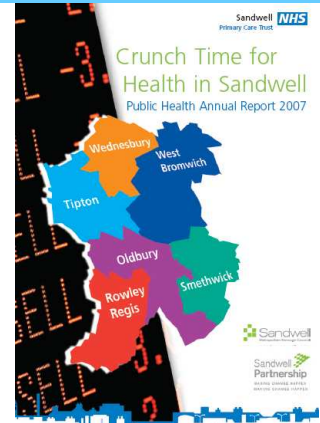
In Sandwell, West Midlands, Red Cat worked closely with public health chiefs to make sure its publication captured the big theme of the day: the credit crunch.

Public health affects everyone's lives, much like the tough financial climate. So the report used this as a bang-up-to-date theme, weaving health issues with those of the current economic situation.

The result is an annual report that is directly relevant to people's lives. It also shows how health chiefs understand the wider context of the impact of the credit crunch on people's ability to be healthy and well.

If you're thinking about your annual report, take some time and consider developing a theme that will be really relevant to your target audience.

- Need help? Just get in touch.



• Would you credit it? A topical annual report

Councils' clear communications cause confusion

Two councils have found their attempts at clear communications have had the opposite effect.

Dave in Durham emailed us with this pearl of wisdom from Durham County Council's Plain English Guide: "If you write actively, you will be far more effective in imparting information to your readers. It's also more concise, crisp and lively.

Whoever taught you: "The cat sat on the mat" wasn't wrong!"

Eh? Explanation anyone? Meanwhile, in Birmingham, the city council has caused a storm by dropping apostrophes from road signs—so St Paul's Square becomes St Pauls Square, and so on.

It says the decision to remove possessive apostrophes will make things con-

sistent. Grammar gurus would rather they were all put in correctly.

Here at Red Cat we applaud the council for making a decision on the matter—regardless of whether we agree or not.

It's a good example of setting a clear corporate style—even if it is controversial.

Have you got a style guide?

News in brief

- Red Cat has been asked to 'spy' again: this time to give a journalist's perspective on a Dept of Health conference.

Experienced hack Carol Hassall will attend the West Midlands Obesity Summit in March—and will deliver constructive feedback to delegates in the closing session.

- *Better late than never*: best wishes for 2009 to all!

Red face for Red Cat...

OK: It's time to put our hands up, whilst holding our heads in shame... if it's possible to do both at once.

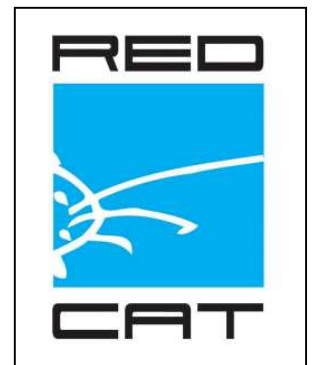
Yup, an eagle-eyed reader spotted an error in the last edition of *The Cat's Whispers*.

Lynne at Sandwell PCT pointed out that we had missed out a 'd' in the Guardian travel guide story. We referred to the organisa-

tion 'Enjoy England an Visit Brighton'. Oops.

We would like to state that this was a deliberate error to test whether recipients read the newsletter carefully—but that would be a lie. It was a sloppy error and we should have used our own much-vaunted copy-checking skills to, er, check our own copy.

Well done Lynne—keep up the good work and keep on reading our newsletter!



• Eagle-eyed reader catches us out...

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