



Innovation

Propaganda with ReFood

ReFood is the UK's leading food waste recycler, collecting and processing over 300,000 tonnes of food waste p.a. from manufacturers and retailers. The food waste is recycled via anaerobic digestion (AD), which produces biogas. This can then be used to run generators to create electricity, or processed in order to be fed directly to the national gas grid. An additional by-product is liquid digestate, with the recycling process generating significant volumes. Traditionally, digestate has been treated as a waste-product, despite being nutrient rich, and AD operators have had to pay for disposal.

Prior to Propaganda's work, ReFood paid significant disposal charges to local Farmers each year for them to take the "waste" product. With AD forecasted to grow in the UK by 800% by 2020, digestate market supply was set to increase, the challenge of reliable, cost effective, disposal was therefore set to worsen and was fast becoming a sector-wide issue. A further challenge was the market perception of digestate as a waste stream, without commercial value. To date, the AD sector had failed to monetise the high nutrient content of digestate. This was a challenge to the long-term scalability and profitability of the ReFood business.

ReFood commissioned Propaganda to deliver a clear and validated strategy, supported by defined actions and implementation plans, to help address the challenges their business faced. Propaganda identified the digestate waste-stream as a barrier to further growth and financial success, and as such, proposed a range of measures to help address it.

As a result of the consultancy project, ReFood has a clear strategy to deal with the digestate challenge that is already yielding significant operational savings of 60% p.a. A phased plan has been developed, designed to evolve the digestate product to produce incremental high value revenue streams. The strategy has further cemented their market leader position, created a unique closed loop proposition and has seen the launch of ReGrow the UK's first branded, food waste derived biofertiliser. This presents the agricultural industry with a sustainable alternative to mined and artificial fertilisers, and monetises what was previously seen as a waste-stream.

Propaganda's work has solved an industry-wide challenge, and created a unique closed-loop proposition to decrease costs and increase revenue. Furthermore, Propaganda has brokered a technical development relationship which will see a programme of research and development to enable digestate to enter the valuable B2C market in a transformed format, further addressing the challenge of dealing sustainably with food waste.