



MARKETING EXCELLENCE 2

Depaul UK
iHobo

Getting up close
and personal



MARKETING
SOCIETY

AWARDS FOR
EXCELLENCE

in association with
Marketing

About The Marketing Society



INSPIRING BOLDER MARKETING LEADERSHIP

The Marketing Society is a not-for-profit organisation owned by its members, with over 2500 senior marketers. Over the past 50 years it has emerged as one of the most influential drivers of marketing in the UK business community.

The Society challenges its members to think differently and to be bolder marketing leaders by supporting the development of leading-edge thinking, and promoting the evidence of effective marketing. The Society does this through the Marketing Society Awards for Excellence; its publications Market Leader, Our Week and rich online Knowledge Zone; a national programme of world-class events; innovative professional development, such as the annual Marketing Leaders Programme; and extensive on-and-offline networking opportunities.

www.marketing-society.org.uk

Foreword

By Roisin Donnelly

What is marketing excellence?



Roisin Donnelly
Corporate Marketing
Director and Head of
Marketing at Procter &
Gamble UK and Ireland

Marketing excellence can drive breakthrough business results for the short and long term. Marketing excellence requires great strategic thinking, great creative thinking and perfect execution.

But how do we assess *marketing* excellence? First we choose brilliant industry judges who are all experienced and successful practitioners of excellence and we ask them to pick out the cases which they see as remarkable. We ask them to look for two key qualities from our winners: creativity and effectiveness.

But marketing continuously changes and evolves, as consumers become more sophisticated and demanding and the media for communicating with them ever more diverse. So the standards for marketing excellence change and in turn become more demanding.

We believe that The Marketing Society Awards for Excellence in association with *Marketing* set the standard of marketing excellence in the UK. They have established this reputation over a period of

more than 25 years, and they have always been based on the principle of searching out the best examples of different marketing techniques in action, that showcase great strategic thinking, great creativity and perfect execution.

In order to be a winner of one of the Society's Awards, marketers have to demonstrate that what they have done is outstanding in comparison with marketing in all industries not just their own particular sector.

If a marketing story has been good enough to impress our judges, then all marketers can learn from it – however senior they have become. The collection of case histories brought together in this book is the best of the best from the past four years of our Awards, and I am confident that it truly demonstrates *marketing excellence*. I have been truly inspired by these case studies and I hope you will be too.

Depaul UK iHobo

Getting up close and personal

Snapshot

A small charity which helps disadvantaged young people used a clever phone app to form strong bonds with an elusive audience.

Key insights

- A ground-breaking marketing strategy based on a gaming app described by one newspaper as a 'charity marketing masterstroke' transformed the charity's donor profile despite the tiny budget of £6000.
- The application, which tech bloggers called 'a tamagotchi with a social conscience', gave a group of people who normally prefer to turn a blind eye to the problem fresh insight into the issues facing young people living on the street.
- It was a world-first to use live footage to make the app more realistic which meant that the campaign's impact was multiplied many times over through the social media buzz, attracting more than half a million downloads.

Summary

Depaul UK is a charity that helps young people who are homeless, vulnerable and disadvantaged. Like most charities, Depaul UK relies on voluntary donations in order to be able to fund the valuable work that it does. But with an ageing donor base, Depaul UK needed to find a way to connect with a younger audience to ensure a solid source of funding for the future. Previous campaigns had tried to achieve this, but with a limited media budget recruiting new donors was proving difficult.

The creation of a single piece of compelling content - an iPhone application - helped Depaul UK reach a whole new audience. iHobo was a rich and engaging gaming experience that asked users to look after a virtual young homeless person for three days.

It didn't just recruit more potential donors than previous advertising campaigns, with the database growing by 14%, but it also raised awareness of Depaul UK and the issue of youth homelessness. With 575,000 downloads, £1.2 million worth of coverage by news and social media channels that raised the profile of both iHobo and Depaul UK, and seventy-four times as many donors as previous advertising campaigns. iHobo was a truly contagious idea and a notable success. Most importantly, this was done with Depaul UK's shoestring budget of just £6,000.

Facing a tricky dilemma

Depaul UK helps young people who are homeless, vulnerable and disadvantaged. Like most charities, Depaul UK relies on voluntary donations for funding. With a loyal donor base, Depaul UK raised £1.4 million from donors, events and investments in 2009. However, a demographic time-bomb has been ticking away inside that donor base. Half of Depaul UK supporters were over 65.

They saw homelessness as an issue that they would like to do something about, had a relative degree of control over their outgoings and were happy to offer their support. While these older donors were a great asset to the charity, there was an obvious problem: how could the charity ensure that those older donors were replaced by younger ones at a sufficient rate to support its activity?

Charity marketing campaigns tend to have two main objectives: eliciting immediate donations and adding new people to the database. Campaigns can deliver quick returns by generating immediate donations. However, building the database and converting those contacts into regular donors can be the more

important outcome, given the potential lifetime value of these supporters. Once new people are added to the database, the challenge is to find ways to convert them to donors. Once converted, the tendency is for them to keep on giving through regular contributions.

With only 22% of donors under the age of 50, Depaul UK set out every year to recruit new, younger donors through advertising. But every year the outcome would be the same: a net decrease in donor numbers, due to a limited media budget and the inevitable shrinking of an ageing donor base.

Small-scale print and radio campaigns were employed to encourage younger people to become donors or register to join the database. Although print and radio were perfectly capable of reaching young, affluent people, with a modest media budget the limitations were obvious. Whereas large charities such as Shelter had the funds necessary to reach 'critical mass' through conventional media channels, Depaul UK simply did not. As a result, all previous campaigns enjoyed limited success, typically recruiting around 50 new donors each year: not enough to counteract the number of older donors that the charity was losing each year.

Turning a blind eye

Sadly, the limited success of previous campaigns was not just the result of limited media spend. Homelessness is an uncomfortable and complex problem that surrounds us all. But research shows that there are plenty of other causes that people would rather support first.

To make matters worse, people aged 25-45 are among the most emotionally-hardened to

homelessness as an issue. They have become so used to seeing young men and women living a life of cold, hunger and uncertainty in urban areas that to them homelessness feels like an unchangeable fact. Impossible to change, but quite possible to ignore in the context of a busy life with more pressing things to think about. The very people that Depaul UK needed to engage with in order to solve the problem of an ageing donor base were in fact among the least likely people to give serious thought to the issue of young people on the street.

Only by forcing these people to come face-to-face with the problem and understand more about it could Depaul UK hope to break people out of denial and get them to do something to help. The key to attracting younger, affluent donors was to get them to see the realities facing young homeless people. Getting people to understand those realities with a small press and radio campaign was near impossible.

Putting the message where it couldn't be ignored

In 2010 Depaul UK, with Publicis London, looked for fundamentally different ways to deliver a more thought-provoking experience that would help its target audience to appreciate the realities of life on the street. There were very few precedents of such a small budget being used to communicate successfully such a complex and emotive set of messages.

The brief was as much of a media challenge as it was a creative challenge. Conventional media selection had been holding the charity back in the past so it began to search for a new place to start the conversation:

- What sort of channel could deliver the in-depth engagement required?

- Which medium would allow the charity to give a more realistic depiction of the realities of youth homelessness?
- How could it get the target audience to find time to take in the message when their lives were so full of distractions?
- What kind of idea would help it outgrow the limitations of its media budget?

It didn't take long to realise that exploiting the relationship that the target audience had with their mobile phones made sense for several reasons.

- First, they are one of the few genuinely interruptive forces in the lives of young, busy and affluent people. They find it easy to look the other way when they see a homeless person on the street, but calls, text messages and emails to their smartphone are impossible to ignore.
- Secondly, it offered the potential for prolonged and meaningful contact with a target audience that most other media struggle to deliver. It is by their side 24-hours a day. It never gets switched off and never goes away.
- Third, smartphones were increasingly becoming the interface of choice for sharing content with your social network. If you like something, you want to pass it on to your peer group as quickly as possible, and more young people were doing this with a mobile device than ever before. A contagious idea delivered through mobile phones gave the charity the opportunity to reach far further than its budget would allow it to through other channels.



Figure 1. iPhone ownership vs income
Source: TGI

- Finally, by focussing on iPhone users, the charity could effectively ensure that it was talking to the right people to recruit as Depaul UK donors. 85% of iPhone users are under the age of 45, and people with higher incomes over-index massively in terms of ownership (Figure 1). It was also discovered that the under-45s were twice as likely to download applications than older iPhone users.

Navigating uncharted territory

The key question was how to make the most of this opportunity. In order to further Depaul UK's objectives, it needed to give people the opportunity to donate, but it also needed to give them reasons why they should care about the plight of the homeless and think to support Depaul UK.

Psychological research showed that gaming about a particular subject increased empathy and identification. Mobile phones were a natural platform for gaming. What if an app could be created to

immerse the target audience into the world of the homeless person and build a sense of identification and empathy that would ultimately lead to support and donations?

Depaul UK wanted to create an experience that made the problem of homelessness feel real and relevant. Seen in the context of previous campaigns, a game was a far more effective means to educate people about the problem, and would allow people to feel some empathy for the homeless rather than just ignoring them. It would also help Depaul UK build a relationship with potential donors, gain recognition and ask them to do something to help the homeless in the real world.

iHobo was a simple concept, but one that took mobile applications into uncharted territory. To get people to see the complexity of the problem the charity asked them to download an app and take care of a virtual homeless person on their iPhone for three days. This meant witnessing first-hand how tough life can be on the street and understanding the potential downward spiral facing young homeless people.

To make the character feel as real as possible, iHobo was the first iPhone application in the world to use live action footage rather than CGI. iHobo had his own gestures and mannerisms that added to the depth of the experience, prompting users to bond closely with the character and feel a real sense of identification with him.

iHobo was also one of the first applications to use Apple's newly-developed push-alert technology, which enabled the charity to produce a piece of content that was truly interruptive. Once downloaded, iHobo wasn't just there when the user wanted to play the game. He was there 24 hours a day, sending alerts to ask for

food, protection from the cold or just a few friendly words. If he was helped out he was OK.

If his calls for help were neglected, his condition would deteriorate and he would become cold, lonely and hungry. Eventually he would sell his possessions and turn to drugs. He might even overdose. Players were able to monitor iHobo's condition through a status bar and were given things like sleeping bags and sandwiches to help him out.

In another world-first, the charity managed to convince Apple to allow it to include a one-click 'text to donate' mechanic in the app to allow people to do something tangible to help real homeless people and to add their names to the Depaul UK database. This served the long-term objective of refreshing an ageing donor base.

Building up the buzz

Having created the application, it set out to make sure that as many people as possible talked about the game. It seeded the app with influential technology bloggers – experts on iPhone apps with an established following. They downloaded the app, played it for three days and began to tell their followers all about their experience (Figures 2 and 3).

Within a week iHobo had reached the top of the iTunes free app chart. 68,298 people rated the game on the AppStore and over 3,000 people tweeted about their iHobo. Not all reactions were positive and a few commentators felt that the idea of making a game out of the plight of the homeless was in poor taste. But most importantly, the reactions of people who actually used the app were overwhelmingly positive. People told their friends about it and got them to play too.

The Guardian heralded the idea as a 'charity marketing masterstroke' and tech bloggers were impressed by the approach and the execution, calling it a 'tamagotchi with social conscience'. Taking into account the experience of playing iHobo and coverage from conventional media and other channels, the entire campaign had an estimated media value of £1.2 million.



Figures 2 and 3. iPhone app

Making a lasting impression

The response to iHobo far exceeded expectations. The application was downloaded 575,000 times and awareness of Depaul UK reached unprecedented levels: monthly traffic to the Depaul UK website increased by 59%. The app succeeded in driving awareness of Depaul UK and furthered understanding of the nature of the homeless problem confronting society.

But how did it deliver in terms of refreshing the donor base? iHobo generated seven times more money through in-game donations than previous advertising campaigns ever achieved. More importantly, these donors all volunteered their contact details and consented to being contacted by Depaul UK in the future.

The campaign thus delivered 74 times more database contacts than previous activity and Depaul UK's donor base actually expanded for the first time in years. Setting aside the fact that the instant donations more than covered the development costs, iHobo enabled Depaul UK to acquire 3,700 new database contacts at a cost of just £1.62 per acquisition.

With an investment of just £6,000 Depaul UK now found itself in a position where it knew who the donors of the future were. Building on the impact of iHobo among these affluent young people with a social conscience would be able to ensure a steady flow of voluntary contributions in the years ahead and carry on helping homeless, vulnerable and disadvantaged young people.

Furthermore, Depaul UK was no longer a lesser-known homeless charity. The donor base expanded by 14% and its public profile grew disproportionately through this innovative approach.

Sponsors

Aviva - 300 Years of Insight

We're the world's sixth-largest insurance group and the biggest in the UK, with 46,000 employees that everyday serve 53 million customers worldwide.

We are committed to delivering one distinctive experience for our customers. Wherever they are, we want them each to feel that "no one recognises me like Aviva". Our global consumer research reveals that most of our competitors are particularly bad at recognising people's individual significance. This research also tells us that small human touches can make a huge difference to a customer's experience. Our aim is to make recognition the familiar quality that distinguishes Aviva from our competitors - just as Apple means user-friendliness and FedEx means reliability.

BT operates in over 170 countries and is one of the world's leading communications services companies. BT is a major supplier of networked IT services to government departments and multinational companies. It's the UK's largest communications service provider to consumer and business markets and is made up primarily of four customer-facing lines of business: BT Retail, BT Global Services, Openreach, and BT Wholesale.

BT operates in a thriving, multi-trillion pound industry that spans the whole world. In recent years the global communications market has been focused on convergence, whereby the boundaries between telcos, IT companies, software businesses, hardware manufacturers and broadcasters have become intertwined to create a new communications industry.

BT has evolved from being a supplier of telephony services to become a



"We know insurance isn't just about policies' and pensions; it's about people. That's why we're making our customers the big picture, putting a spotlight on them and our people. Putting customers at the heart of everything not only makes sense for them, it makes good commercial sense too." (Amanda Mackenzie, Aviva's chief marketing and communications officer)

We are working hard every day to build the company around what our customers want from us. That's why Aviva now ranks among the UK's top ten most valuable brands, according to the 2010 Brand Finance Global 500 survey and that success is something we are looking to replicate across the world.



leading provider of innovative communications products, services, solutions and entertainment products. BT's business customers range from multinational, multi-site corporations to SMEs and start-ups.

More than 80 per cent of the FTSE 100 and 40 per cent of Fortune 500 companies rely on BT for networking, applications and system integration. The National Health Service, Procter & Gamble, PepsiCo, BMW, Emirates, Fiat, Microsoft, Philips, and Unilever are just some of the organisations working with BT.

BT has been a driving force behind the success of 'Broadband Britain'. Thanks to the company's investment, nearly every home in Britain now has access to broadband and in September 2009, BT announced plans to more than double the availability of its fastest fibre broadband service.

MARKETING EXCELLENCE 2

"A treasure trove of examples covering the whole waterfront, from launching new brands to revitalising, sustaining and extending established ones, and from insights to advertising and sustainability. Whatever your business, it should make you proud to be a marketer, shake up your thinking and inspire you to go the extra mile."

Professor Patrick Barwise, London Business School, Chairman of Which?

"This exciting book demonstrates how great marketing can solve the most difficult problems, through analysis, teamwork and creativity.

It contains 34 fascinating case studies, selected from hundreds of high quality entries to The Marketing Society Awards for Excellence. Those involved had the determination to win, and the courage to think differently. An inspiring read."

Professor Hugh Davidson, Co-Founder, Oxford Strategic Marketing

"This is the textbook, the toolkit and the manual for marketing excellence."

Cilla Snowball, Chairman, AMV BBDO

"These cases are a great source to stimulate your thinking. Some will stimulate new thoughts, some will unlock ideas from the back of your memory. All of them however are great fuel for growth."

Keith Weed, Chief Marketing and Communication Officer, Unilever

Featuring 34 award-winning case studies from some of the world's leading brands:

Sky+ BT Business NHS Blood and Transplant Magners Change4Life alli O2 Waitrose KFC McDonald's Hovis British Gas Audi Marks & Spencer Virgin Atlantic Dulux Sainsbury's Pedigree Thinkbox Harlequins More Than UPS Walkers Aviva ebookers Shell ICI Paints Channel 4 British Heart Foundation Keep Britain Tidy Ariel

© Copyright The Marketing Society 2010. All rights reserved.

This PDF edition is for the personal use of the purchaser who may print from it a single copy. It may not be reproduced, posted on intranets, extranets or the internet, e-mailed, archived or shared electronically either within the purchaser's organisation or externally without express written permission from The Marketing Society. To share this PDF with colleagues at the same site or across multiple sites within an organisation by email or via an electronic network please contact The Marketing Society to purchase an appropriate licence.



in association with

Marketing

sponsored by



BT



To download further case studies or purchase the book, Marketing Excellence 2, please visit www.marketingexcellence.org.uk or Phone 020 8973 1700