

Refuge



For women and children.
Against domestic violence.

Speaking up to save lives: The Refuge #dontcoveritup campaign

Category: Marketing on a Shoestring

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Special Thanks To: Lisa King, Refuge
Lauren Luke
Claire Coady, BBH.

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Summary

Refuge is one of the UK's largest domestic violence charities. This paper describes how, without a production of media budget, they used ingenuity, an understanding of the modern media landscape, and the power of creative content to start a conversation no-one wanted to have.

In 2012, Refuge was faced with a significant lack of funding but a desire to address the shocking consequences of ignorance about domestic violence among the teen audience. An audience that had no interest at all in hearing Refuge's message, and all of the tools of modern media at their disposal to help them avoid it.

Instead of relying on disruptive communications methods that were unlikely to be effective (and which we couldn't afford anyway), Refuge instead took a subversive approach, using understanding of our media culture and powerful content to create an impact far beyond the budget available.

A trusted medium became a "Trojan Horse" for an unheralded and shocking piece of content. Content was tailored entirely to its environment, and designed specifically to encourage users to replicate the "Trojan Horse" in sharing it themselves. Simultaneously, the campaign was packaged specifically for a mass media audience hungry for "social media sensation".

The result was a campaign that started conversations on an (inter)national, social and individual level – a campaign that generated millions of pounds worth of media value, that exposed almost 100 million people to a vital issue, created a space for people to discuss and share subjects and feelings that usually remained hidden, and that changed thousands of lives in a profound and immediate way.

And all for £404.

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Speak up, save a life: Refuge's battle to be heard.

Since its foundation in 1971, Refuge has the largest single provider of specialist domestic violence services¹, and a tireless advocate for a world where domestic violence is considered unacceptable. On any day, Refuge will be in action supporting an average of 2,000 women and children², victims of an issue that affects over one million women a year³, and results in two murders⁴ and 30 attempted suicides each week⁵.

In 2012, Refuge's positioning was "Speak up, Save a life". Partly, this positioning was required because Refuge need others to speak up and speak out alongside them. "Austerity Britain" is an increasingly difficult budgetary landscape for charities, and a 25% YOY growth in the number of women and children accessing their services left little budget for communication.

But the call to action was literally true on a number of levels:

FIGURE 1: THE POWER OF SPEAKING UP

National Level	Social Level	Individual Level
Public attention and advocacy is key to maintaining public funding for charities such as Refuge to enable them to continue life-saving work, as well as placing pressure on the government to ensure long-term change.	Refuge strives to ensure that everyone understands that domestic violence is a societal issue, not an individual problem. This work is vital to bringing about long term enduring change. It is essential that we all understand that we have a part to play in bringing domestic violence to an end	Only 16% of domestic violence is ever reported to the police; 65% of women aged 18-21 experiencing domestic violence do not tell anyone. 90% of those women who call the Refuge/Women's Aid helpline and are still living with their partner will leave them.

Sources: Refuge and YouGov, 2009 Humphreys and Tiara, 2002

Refuge consistently has to find ways of getting people to speak up with very limited resources and without advertising budgets.

¹ Refuge, 2013

² Refuge 2013

³ HM Government, 2012

⁴ HM Government, 1999

⁵ Refuge, 2010

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An urgent conversation: Teens and domestic violence.

Nowhere was this need more obvious than in the case of teens in the UK, where the lack of education and knowledge about domestic violence is not only scandalous but dangerous.

Research shows 75% boys and 50% of girls aged 9-14 believe that hitting a partner is acceptable in some situations⁸. 40% of teenage girls would consider giving a boyfriend a second chance if he hit them. A third believe that cheating justifies violence⁹.

Little wonder, then, that that more than half of teenage girls aged 13-18 have experienced violence at the hands of a partner and considered it normal¹⁰, and all the more dangerous that barely more than a third of late teens would know where to go for help if they experienced that type of violence¹¹.

The attitude of our children to domestic violence is a perfect example of how danger can grow in the absence of genuine understanding and debate. The challenge was to understand how to communicate with them effectively.

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⁸ European Union, 2012

⁹ NSPCC/Sugar magazine, 2005.

¹⁰ "Standing on my own two feet": disadvantaged teenagers, intimate partner violence and coercive control", NSPCC, 2011.

¹¹ Refuge/Yougov 2009.

Our Friends Electric: The media lifestyle of teenagers

Teens don't want to know what's good for them.

Public health information is, literally, the last thing teenagers want to hear about¹². And the problem with the fragmented media age we're living in is that, increasingly, it's virtually impossible to get anyone to listen to anything they don't want to.

Teens create their own media environments: They don't want ours.

Our media culture is "a land of endless information and endless choice, endless technical opportunities for fashioning your own media environments"¹³. And the teen audience are more adept at building these environments than anyone else.

They have the lowest consumption of TV of any audience – a quarter less per day than average. They have the highest consumption of time shifted and internet TV. They are the demographic most likely to be part of social networks, consuming entertainment from their friends over traditional top-down media¹⁴.

Once you're in, you're in.

But the relationships they have with the media they do consume are intensely personal and influential. 16-24 year olds are 16% more likely to communicate daily with their friends and family through social media than face-to-face. They're 40% more likely to text message¹⁵. Research suggests that "many teens view their online social networks as their primary social groups...these social networks have a huge influence on the emotional health of the users and whether they will eventually view themselves in a positive or negative light¹⁶.

Conversation, not donation

Whether it's growing up in the participatory culture of digital media, or simple lack of funds, the idea of "click activism" is true: teens are much more likely¹⁸ to see their role in campaigns as a social one rather than an economic one. Our call to action needed to speak to their way of contributing, rather than alienating them.

Social media are made to be subverted.

Rickrolling, culture jamming, pwning, trolling; the language of social media is the language of casual deceit, pranking and practical joking: viral spread is often based on sharing material that will shock, surprise or overturn expectation.

¹² 13th out of 13 categories of information in BBH qualitative research.

¹³ Farhad Manjoo, "True Enough"

¹⁴ Ofcom technology tracker Q1 2012.

¹⁵ Ofcom technology tracker Q1 2012.

¹⁶ Teenagers perceptions of advertising in the social networking environment", Kelly, 2008.

¹⁸ BBH bespoke research, 2012.

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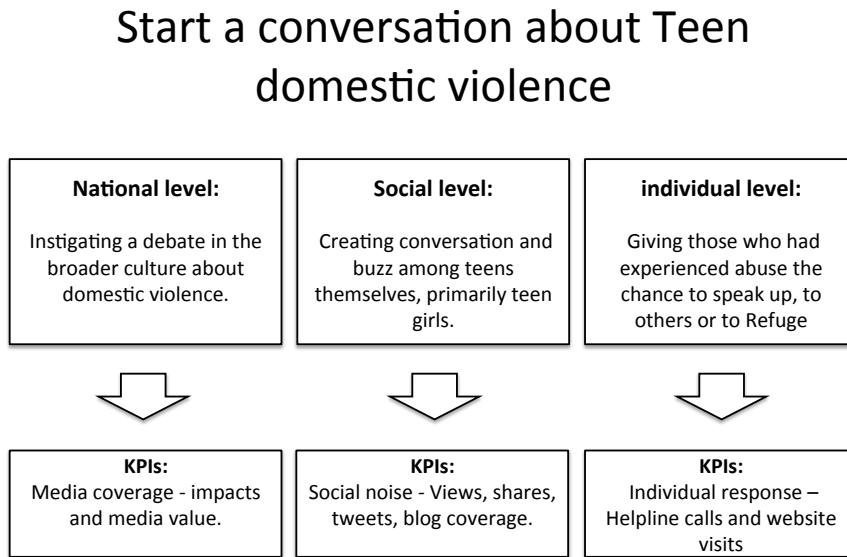
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Our communications objectives: Starting a conversation.

Our intention was to **start a conversation** around the issue of teen domestic violence: to get people to speak up and save lives. We saw this working broadly on three levels:

FIGURE 2: OUR COMMUNICATIONS OBJECTIVES IN DETAIL



The issue for us was to find a way to start a conversation with an audience that had absolutely no interest in being part of it.

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Our strategy: Building a Trojan horse.

We knew teens wouldn't come to us voluntarily, but we couldn't disrupt their media consumption. So we decided to subvert it. To use existing structures and behaviours to sneak our message to them in a way that they would welcome and engage with on their own terms.

4 key principles of our campaign:

1. Find a Trojan horse.

We needed to find a vehicle that:

- Was an existing part of teen girl's media environment.
- Had a wide reach existing reach and a strong personal connection with the audience that would allow for both strong reactions and open conversation.
- Was as far from the seriousness of domestic violence as possible.
- Had the courage to subvert the expectations of their audience in a dramatic manner.

2. Create content that is powerful and relevant to the vehicle.

We didn't want to feel like a PSA message wedged into someone else's channel. We wanted something surprising, even shocking, but most importantly natural for the vehicle we were using, so that it felt like a genuine part of the existing relationship between the channel and visitor.

3. Hide our intention, and let other people hide it to encourage pass-on.

We decided to embrace the power of people being surprised by our appearance, rather than fearing it. The more we could increase the element of surprise in encountering our message, the more powerful the reaction would be on an individual level, and the more likely people would be to pass it on and comment on it.

4. Present the activity to the media as a "social media sensation" story.

Our intention from the outset was to use our activity as a story to present to the mainstream national media. This was another kind of Trojan Horse: using a story about teens and social media as a way of opening the door to a story about teens and domestic violence. This might happen organically, but if we put a rigorous PR plan in place from Day 1, we could use social media to drive the national story, and national media to drive traffic to the social story.

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A traditional disruptive approach wasn't going to work. But we knew our audience wouldn't come to us through choice. We needed to create a piece of communication that was subversive: directly tailored to the way that teens consume and communicate infor... [9]

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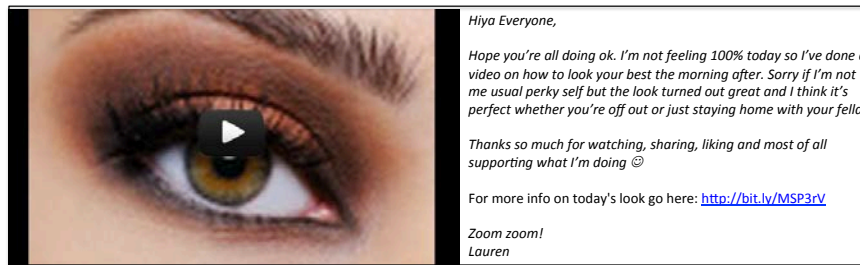
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The work: #dontcoveritup.

Lauren Luke is a make-up artist and social media entrepreneur. She films tutorials every one to two weeks, often themed on a “Get the Look” approach: tutorials in the summer of 2012 featured the make up of Kristen Stewart and the Hunger games. The tutorials have become the basis of a large and engaged community – Lauren’s channel has 455,000 subscriber the majority of which are 13-24 and female²⁰

On 2nd of July 2012, Lauren posted her latest tutorial: a clip called “How to look your best the morning after”. The thumbnail image for the tutorial (which would also accompany any shares of the content) was Lauren’s generic one of a fully made-up eye, and the descriptive text for the film was Lauren at her usual, chatty form:

FIGURE 3: OUR SPOLER-FREE TEASER



²⁰ Youtube analytics.

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Deleted: from the North East of England, who has turned her talent for presenting informal, chatty make-up tutorial's delivered to a webcam into a successful Youtube YouTube Channel. Lauren

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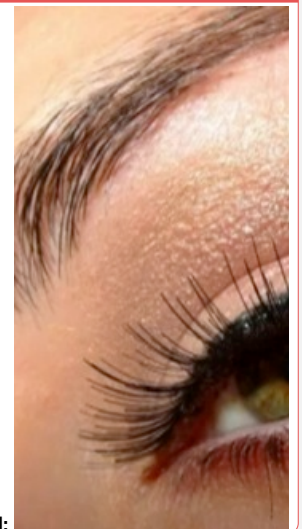
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Comment [1]: Found it (or a very similar one) on her Pinterest page – it's her favourite eyeshadow picture.

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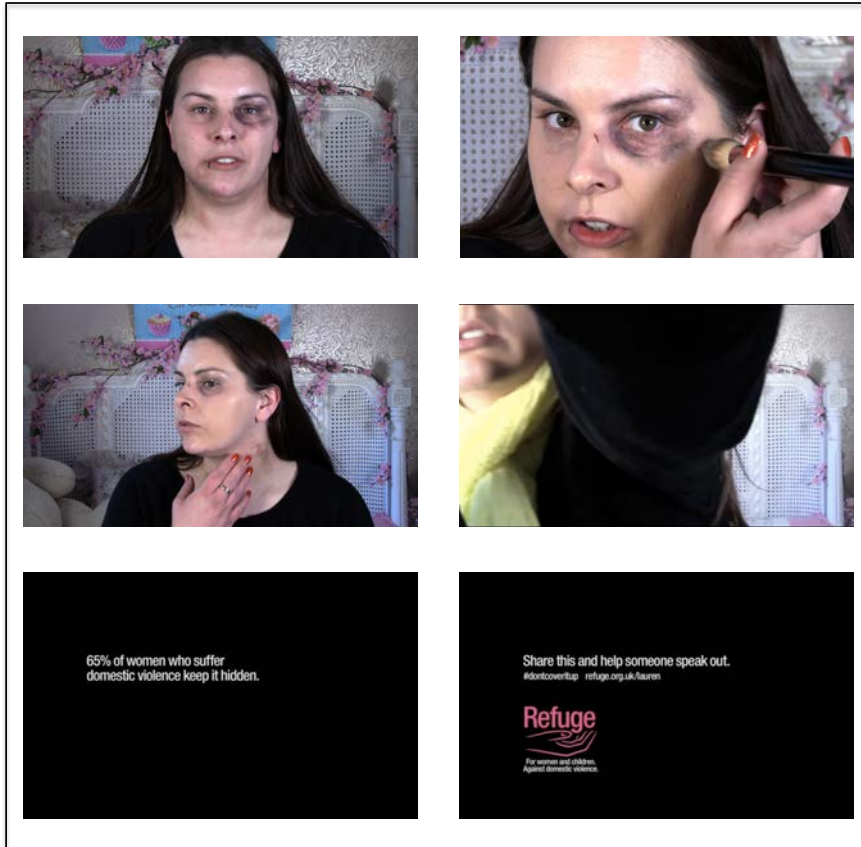
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When users visited that days tutorial, they encountered something simultaneously familiar and disturbing: a heavily bruised Lauren chirpily talking through her latest make tips: how to cover up the marks of domestic violence, and shrinking in fear from a door opening.

It was only 1 minute and 45 seconds into the film that the presence of Refuge was revealed.

FIGURE 4: THE FILM



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Simultaneously, a PR roll-out began in social and traditional media. Social affairs blogging and news media and fashion and lifestyle sites and twitter feeds like Glamour and Grazia either simply presented the film as a makeup tutorial (where appropriate) or told the story behind the footage; how we'd used social media to surprise an audience, and why it was so important to do so.

Wherever the story appeared, there was a call to speak up, whether to report your own experience, help someone else, or simply register your opposition to domestic violence.

FIGURE 5: CREATING A SENSATION



With all of the non-Refuge staff involved working on a voluntary basis, pro-bono PR and £0 media spend, the entire campaign was produced for the cost of three same-day train returns for our creative team and producer from London to Durham, and a taxi to and from Durham train station to Lauren's home: a total production budget of £404²¹.

²¹ BBH expense claim May 2012.

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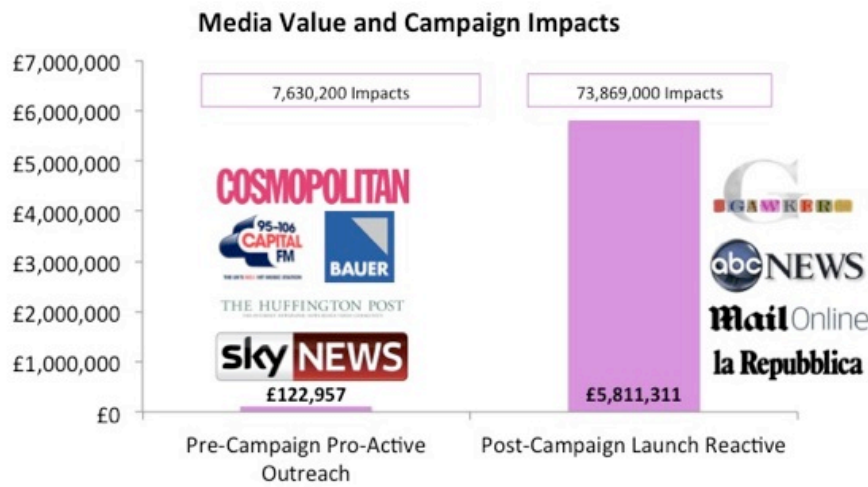
The Results

1. The National level

Not only did it produce a conversation on a national level, but the story went international. The campaign was featured in 22 countries, and on TV and radio stations from LA to Helsinki.

Earned media that reached approx. 73 million people dwarfed the value of the pro-bono PR push that kickstarted the campaign.

FIGURE 6: OVERDELIVERING ON MEDIA VALUE



Source: BARB and BBH

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Deleted: Seeding the initial content in high-profile sites and celebrities such as the Huffington Post and Stephen Fry quickly spread the story to other news outlets, blogs and tweeters all over the world. PR value of £92,340 from proactive, pre-campaign outreach quickly generated an additional £5.8m of additional PR value.

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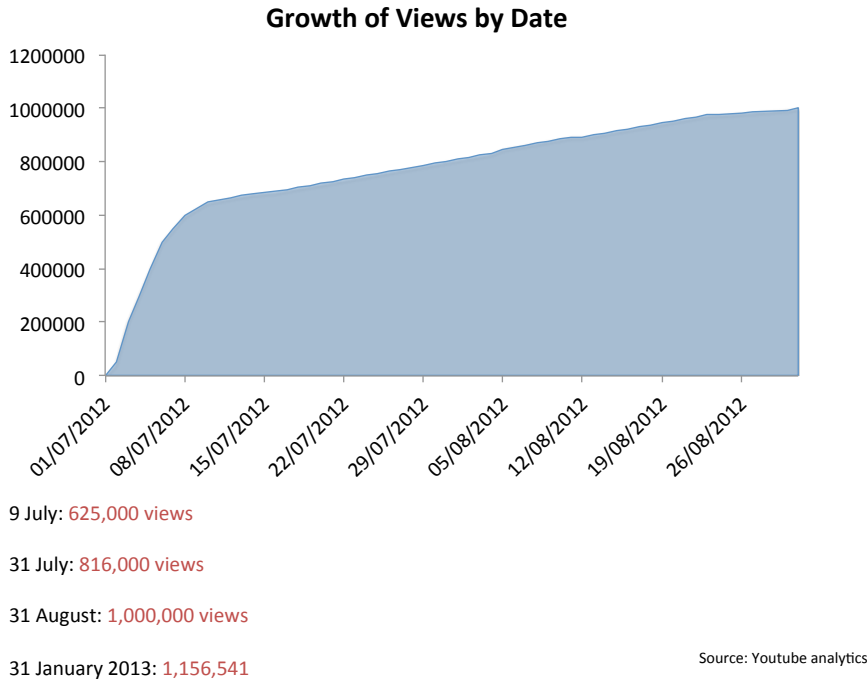
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2. The Social level

For a video with no bought support at all, the growth of the film was spectacular²².

FIGURE 7: RAPID GROWTH IN VIEWS



9 July: 625,000 views

31 July: 816,000 views

31 August: 1,000,000 views

31 January 2013: 1,156,541

Source: Youtube analytics

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²² The film received 2,587% more views than Lauren's previous five videos, and only 7% of views came from existing subscribers to her channel as the buzz around the film spread.

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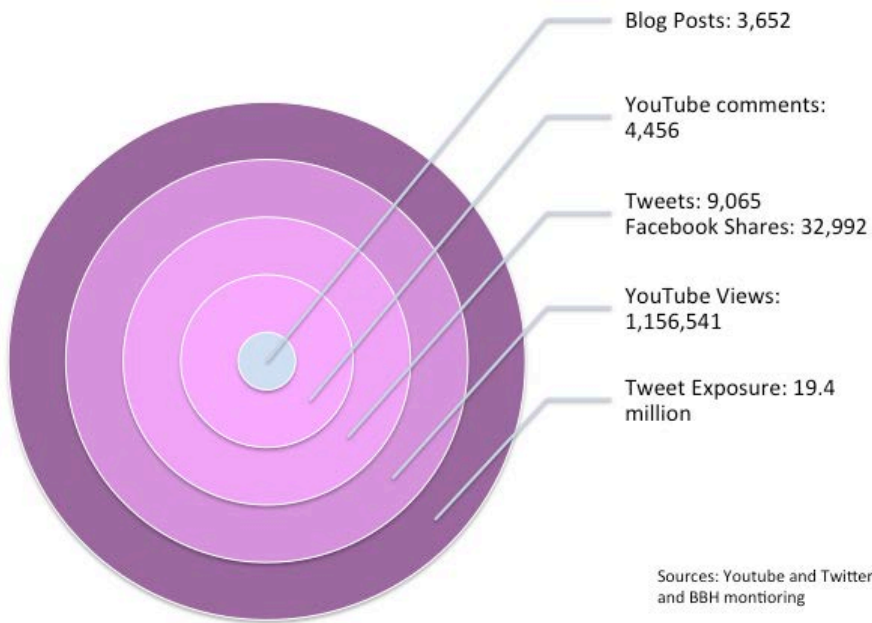
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Thousands wrote about the film, tens of thousands shared or commented on it; hundreds of thousands viewed it and millions heard about it.²³

FIGURE 8: THE SOCIAL FOOTPRINT



²³ This visitor activity was atypical of the platform at the time, with 1,092% more comments and a 1,388% higher engagement rate than Lauren's 5 previous posts.

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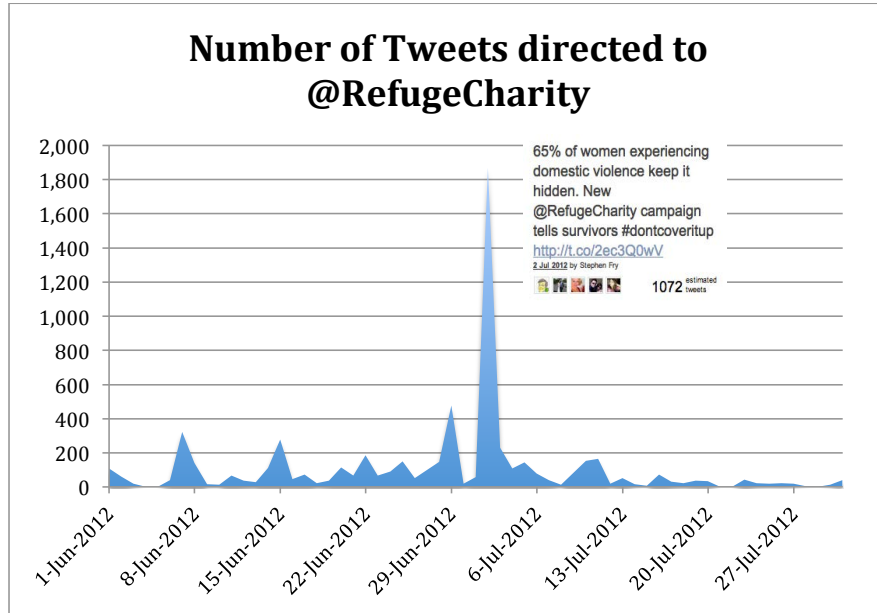
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The level of direct contact through Twitter increased to a level beyond anything Refuge had previously seen.

FIGURE 9: INCREASED CONVERSATION WITH REFUGE



Source: Sysomos and BBH

The profile of tweets changed significantly, indicating a strong response from our target audience.

FIGURE 7: A SHIFT IN AUDIENCE

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Who is talking about Refuge, from sample of 500 tweets	
Pre-Campaign Period (1 May – 30 June)	Post-Campaign Period (1 July – 31 August)
Women – 59%	Women – 75%
Men – 41%	Men – 25%
Average age: 35+	Average age: 13-35

Source: Youtube Analytics, Social Bakers

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What was more important than any of these figures, was the response of the people on Lauren’s board, which became for a number of weeks a place where people could voice their opinions, share their concerns, and support each other.

FIGURE 10: THE COMMUNITY

This made me cry, a month ago my now ex-boyfriend hit me for the first and only time. Part of me sometimes questions myself on what would I have done if it was done in private. I don't even know the answer. He's in jail and his trial (he also stole my phone) is in three days. Even though its intended to shock and I knew it wasn't real, I still believed it. It's important to raise the issue that abuse isn't just physical and that we should seek help and cut it off before it does. I didn't even realize he emotionally and financially abused me until later.
Don't cover it up!*

To this day my own mother, whom I was living with, does not know the abuse I took from an ex of mine because of my concealer skills. I knew this would be a rough watch, but damn. I am grateful to be out of that relationship, and I am grateful that places like Refuge are out there trying to help end DV.

this video is all important to me. my parents have just split and i am glad they have. why? because i had to sit in my room next to theirs while i heard my mam scream as my dad kicked and punched her. i would see blood and bruises the next morning and we all HAD to act like it never happened. Thank you Lauren. my mam and i respect you for this video and because of this video she has now reported my dad.
X

Same here. I found this to be an incredibly powerful message. I found myself bawling my eyes out.

There are so many victims out there that are afraid to speak out and most do hide it.

After I sat there motionless for a while, it dawned on me why this hit me so hard. It subtly normalizes something that is generally pushed to the fringes and out of mind, but yet *actually* is an everyday, "normal" occurrence.
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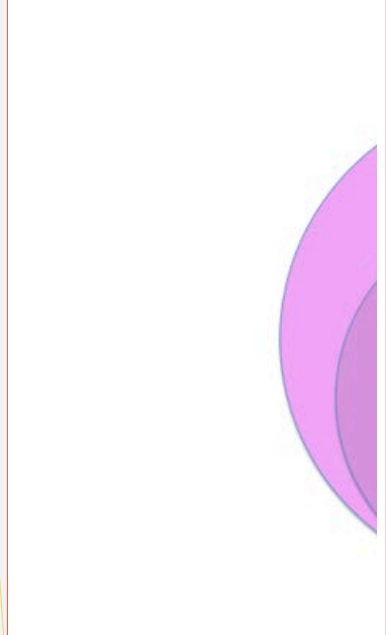
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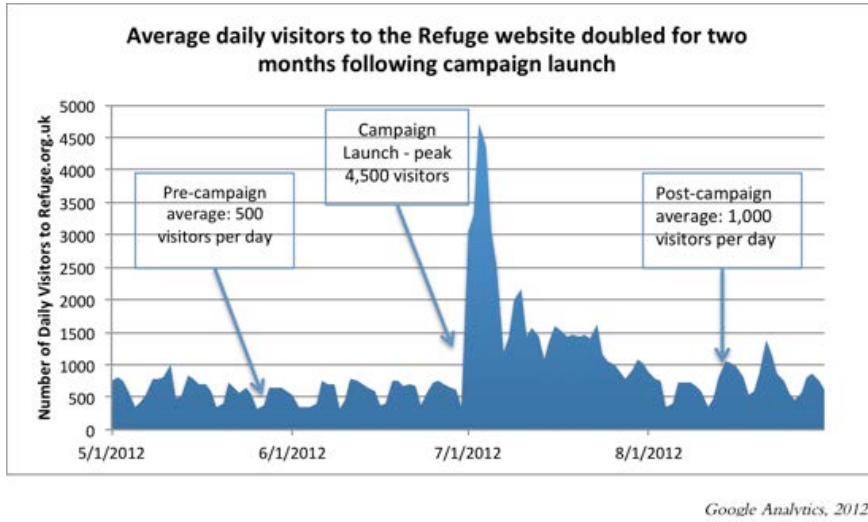
Simon Robertson 19/2/13 15:55

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3. The individual level.

We created a significant and sustained increase in visitor numbers to the Refuge website.

FIGURE 11: A SUSTAINED GROWTH IN TRAFFIC



Simon Robertson 18/2/13 12:23

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: Giving those who had experienced abuse the chance to speak up, to others or to Refuge.

Simon Robertson 19/2/13 12:58

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Simon Robertson 18/2/13 21:13

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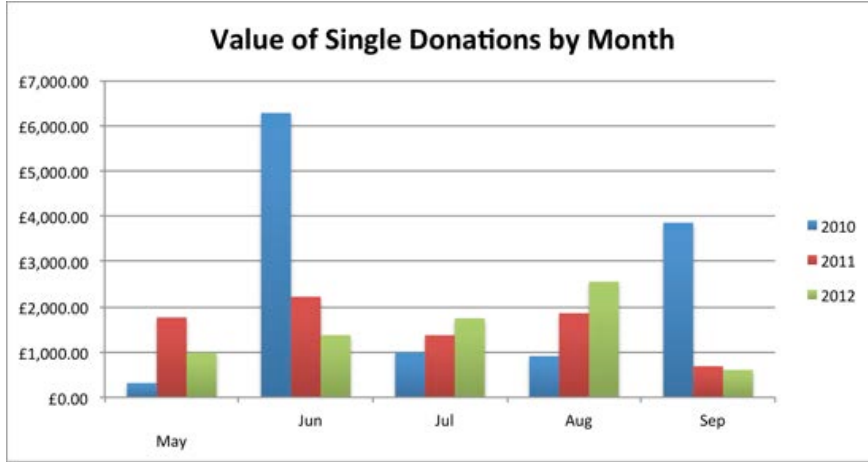
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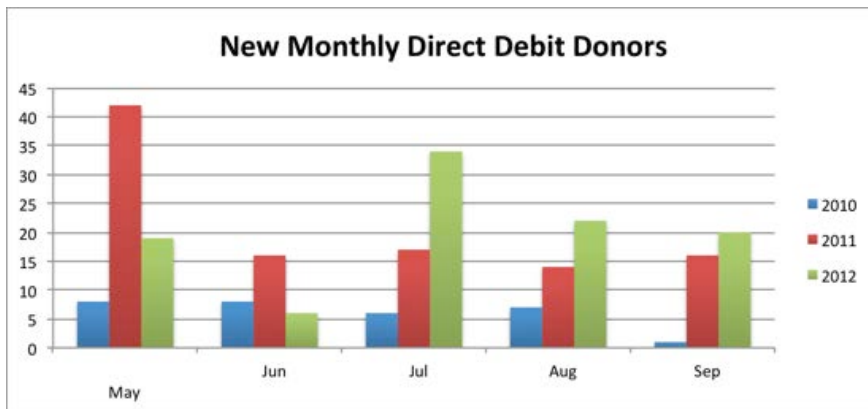
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Although we had specifically deprioritised fundraising, both single donations and direct debit donations increased YOY during July and August against a trend of decline.

FIGURE 12: UPLIFTS IN DONATION



Refuge, 2012

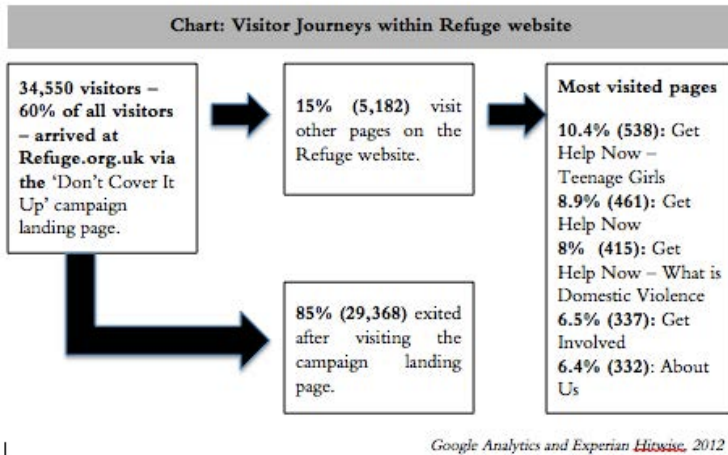


Refuge, 2012

Most important were the number of people who were directly inspired by the campaign and to speak up and starting changing their own lives.

34,550 visitors arrived on the site through the Lauren Luke landing page to learn more, volunteer and get help.

FIGURE 13: THE JOURNEY OF LANDING PAGE VISITORS



Simon Robertson 18/2/13 21:14

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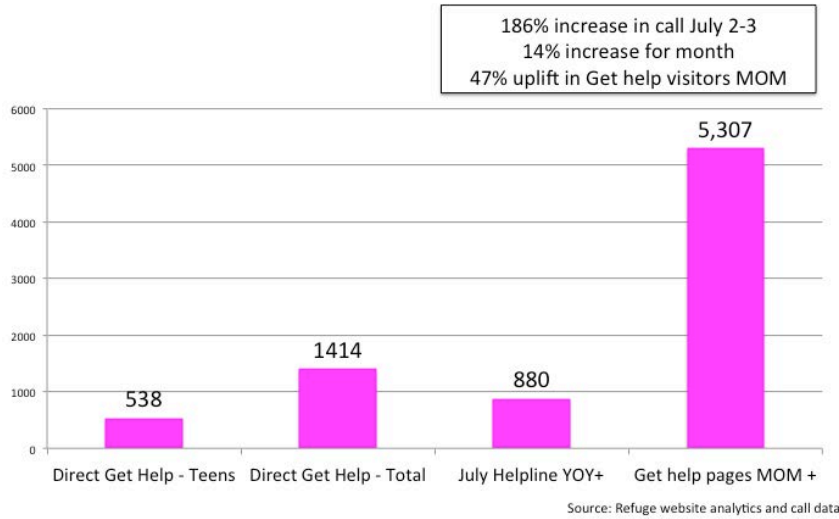
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As well as more than 1,000 people directly getting help, significant uplifts were seen in overall traffic to Refuge's Get Help pages, and in the calls to the Refuge helpline.

FIGURE 14: INDIVIDUALS FINDING SUPPORT

Increased activity on help channels



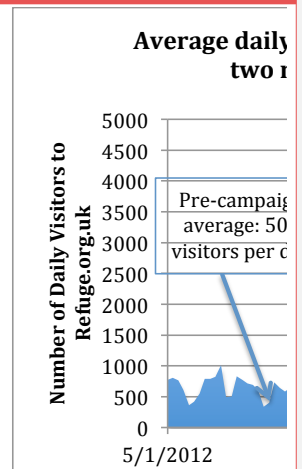
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Conclusion

With a team of dedicated voluntary workers and an idea, we managed to turn a production budget of £404 and a media budget of £0 into a series of conversations valued at over £5 million, that spoke to our audience where they lived in a way that encouraged them to speak out themselves.

More than a million people watched, shared or commented. More than 92 million people were exposed to our message. More importantly, those conversations happened in a way that convinced up to 6,000 people to take step to help themselves.

The modern, fragmented media landscape might be more difficult for traditional advertising to disrupt, but it also opens up opportunities for the right cause, the right content and the right strategy to operate much more powerfully than spend would indicate.

In today's landscape, there is no cause so small that it can't use the power of an urgent and important message, smart thinking and creativity to be heard when it speaks up.

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