

CIPR Pride Awards SCOTLAND

10. Best Use of Media Relations

The BIG Partnership: The Kwik Fit Insurance Lollipop Person of the Year Competition

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Introduction

Kwik Fit Insurance is one of the UK's leading insurance intermediaries with head offices in Uddingston, Glasgow.

While the company is well-known in Scotland for its strong links with the local community, the business wanted to replicate this 'community spirit' throughout the UK through increased profile for its Lollipop Person of the Year Awards.

The competition's clear road safety message would also allow KFI to strengthen its Corporate Social Responsibility credentials and its brand at a grass roots level.

The Lollipop Person of the Year Awards had been running for six years in Scotland when, in 2008, the decision was taken to roll the campaign out nationally. This first attempt at UK-wide involvement was relatively successful but it was felt more could be done.

The BIG Partnership was appointed in January 2009, with the task of involving communities across the UK with the competition on a scale that had never been achieved before.

Kwik Fit Insurance set the following objectives:

- Communicate KFI's community values
- Reinforce the campaign's road safety message to schools & families
- Increase entries from primary schools across the UK
- Raise media awareness of the vital role of the lollipop person

Strategy

The search to find Britain's favourite lollipop person presented the perfect PR vehicle to involve every community in the UK.

Cost-effective use of public relations and a robust media relations campaign to promote the competition was fundamental to its success, given the vast audience and massive geographical area involved.

It was decided to send pre-competition teaser emails to every UK primary school before the summer holidays and follow-up emails would be sent once the competition was launched.

The BIG Partnership also facilitated a campaign to engage the support of all local and national road safety officers across the UK.

Crucially, in order to secure buy-in from the wider community, The BIG Partnership recommended writing to every member of the UK and Scottish parliaments as well as members of the Welsh and Northern Ireland assemblies to ask them to support the Lollipop Person of the Year Awards.

Implementation

The Awards had never before been launched outside Scotland so to give the competition UK-wide significance, The BIG Partnership recommended a high-profile launch in London.

Photographs were taken at the iconic Abbey Road crossing, probably the best-known zebra crossing in Britain, and also at the Houses of Parliament to focus the minds of MPs on the issue of road safety.

GMTV personality Lorraine Kelly, who is an ambassador for the awards, starred in the launch photography alongside local school pupils. The launch release and photography was regionalised and was sent to every national and regional newspaper in the UK.

The BIG Partnership sent a template news release to every political representative in the UK which allowed them to insert their own road safety message to send to their local media.

Case studies were created from previous winners and the entries received and were sent to all media in the eleven UK regions.

Media events were staged at each of the regional winners' schools and a news conference and photocall was held at the UK winner's school.

Creativity

Following the initial launch in September 2009, it was important to maintain the momentum of the campaign by getting as many schools as possible to enter. Direct engagement with the head teachers of the primary schools, their pupils and staff was key.

The content of the entry packs was designed by The BIG Partnership and KFI to mirror the school curriculum and encouraged creativity by asking the pupils to send in supporting material for their nominations such as pictures, poems, stories, songs and even DVDs (*find enclosed with supporting evidence*).

Every communication issued by The BIG Partnership also drove traffic to the competition website which had road safety advice and online games.

The BIG Partnership followed up its template releases to political representatives with further communications via email and telephone. This resulted in a momentum building which led to George Foulkes, MSP for Lothians, tabling a motion in the Scottish Parliament applauding the competition's road safety message and urging all MSPs to get their local schools involved.

Evaluation and measurement

- The three month campaign generated more than £820,000 worth of PR coverage
- 300 separate articles appeared in the English, Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland newspapers with a substantial proportion generated by the local parliamentary representative's involvement (*find enclosed with supporting evidence*)
- 10 broadcasts were generated on regional radio and TV stations, with the winner appearing on STV and BBC Scotland
- The ROI achieved by The BIG Partnership was 36:1

Testimonials

"Entering the Lollipop Person of the Year competition ticked so many boxes for us. It allowed us to learn by exploring issues like health and road safety. The children used expressive art, music, speech and writing to a degree that both surprised and delighted the staff. In fact it was exactly the sort of project that the new Curriculum for Excellence is all about."

– Moira Monaghan, head teacher of 2009 winning school Buses Primary

"The key challenge we issued to The Big Partnership was to make the competition bigger and better than 2008 and they delivered on this. The number of schools entering was up, the number of articles appearing in the media was up and, most importantly, our key road safety messages were communicated to a wider audience than ever before."

– Gordon Ross, Kwik Fit Insurance PR and events manager

Results compared with objectives

- The number of UK primary schools entering the competition exceeded 1,000 for the first time
- The number of individual schoolchildren engaging with the competition rose from 15,000 in 2008 to 19,000 in 2009, a 27% increase in the number of entries received
- In the ten weeks of the campaign, The Lollipop Person of the Year website received 45,000 unique user hits, with 600,000 page views
- The coverage generated a total of 13 million opportunities for the public to view the competition and the KFI brand
- More than 100 MPs and MSPs supporting the campaign, with Parliamentary motions also being tabled
- Total budget allocated to the project - £11k – £50k

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