



Entrant company name: **Tin Man and Guide Dogs**

Entry title: **The Mutt-ley Crew**

Category: **Low Budget Campaign**

## **BRIEF**

Guide Dogs is in critical need of Puppy Raiser volunteers to help raise the next generation of guide dogs. Puppy Raisers are volunteers who look after a puppy for 12-16 months and guide it through training, socialisation, and the introduction of new environments whilst providing a loving home.

With the projected increase of the visually impaired population in the UK set to rise to over four million by 2050, Guide Dogs needs to get more puppies trained to help the lives of people with visual impairments, and Puppy Raisers are crucial to this.

Our brief was simple:

Generate low cost, high-value media coverage of the Puppy Raisers programme  
Raise awareness of the Puppy Raisers programme  
Encourage people to find out more about becoming a Puppy Raiser

Being a charity, the idea would need to be simple, impactful and most of all cost-effective.

Budget £2250

## **TARGET AUDIENCE & STRATEGY**

Puppy raising suits dog lovers of all sorts. If the home environment is suitable and you have the time and dedication to socialise a puppy, you could volunteer. But it is a sizeable commitment, so we needed to go far and wide to reach a broad audience.

The problem- in media terms- was there was nothing new to say. The Puppy Raiser programme has been running for years and there have been multiple raiser recruitment campaigns.

The media would need a really good reason to cover it again.

However, from working with Guide Dogs for the last four years, we know that the media love hearing the behind-the-scenes details of how puppies are trained to help change the lives of people with sight loss.

And, as part of puppy raising, volunteers are asked to socialise guide-dogs-in-training and introduce pups to a variety of people and social environments; from young children and other dogs to the hubbub of cafes, and from people carrying walking sticks and umbrellas to people in uniforms and wheelchairs. If they're not used to these everyday occurrences, dogs can become fearful and reactive.

And our office dog Louie- who barked at delivery drivers wearing caps, our bearded creative director and the man in the nearby corner shop who is covered in tattoos - was evidence of this. We tested our 'Louie' insight with the charity, who confirmed unfamiliar, unique and distinctive visual characteristics can cause anxiety amongst young dogs.

Our strategy was to use real people in a visual and relatable way to highlight that anyone can be a Puppy Raiser, no matter what you look like. And actually it could help to socialise pups too.

## **CREATIVE EXECUTION**

Welcoming our 'Mutt-ley Crew'... members of the public with unfamiliar physical attributes that will help puppies become accustomed to the world around them.

The 'Mutt-ley Crew' gathered for a socialisation event with fifteen, 8-week old future guide dogs. Our Mutt-ley Crew had interesting and unique physical attributes that were also relatable for the public- extensive tattoos, piercings and long beards.

Our imagery was carefully curated to create a beautiful visual contrast of young, fluffy puppies against tattoos, beards and piercings.

We packaged up our striking images with Guide Dogs research which showed the number of pups that react with fear or confusion to physical attributes they haven't been exposed to before, along with the numbers of people who possess such qualities. In fact, more than half of men now have facial hair, additionally a quarter of people have tattoos.

We coupled this with a call out for Puppy Raisers with distinctive characteristics and created, in partnership with Guide Dogs' Head of Puppy Raising, a socialisation checklist to be completed in the first 16 weeks of puppies' lives to help them adapt confidently to an array of everyday situations.

We then went hell for leather in securing media attention. And the media went barking mad for it...

## **RESULTS & EVALUATION**

The results speak for themselves:

330 pieces of coverage in 3 days

17 national media articles- every national newspaper covered it at least twice

We had a half-page picture story in The Times and three separate articles on MailOnline

93 pieces of broadcast coverage

TV segments on BBC News, Sky News Breakfast, BBC Three, TalkTV

Radio stations like LBC, Capital FM, Virgin, Absolute and Heart had it on rolling news

203 regional print and online articles

The story even travelled as far as New Zealand, Singapore, the US and Canada

In addition, analysis from Guide Dogs showed:

Visits to the Puppy Raiser page on the website nearly doubled, from an average of nearly 5,000 per day to more than 9,000 visits during our launch period 59% increase in Puppy Raiser applications compared to the average number per week

But don't just take our word for it. Paul Martin, External Comms Manager at Guide Dogs, said:

“Our agency Tin Man excels in delivering exceptional creativity and strategic insight, ensuring every campaign resonates powerfully with our target audiences. Their expertise in identifying newsworthy elements guarantees impactful stories, even within constrained budgets. We consistently achieve remarkable results and get our voice heard in a crowded market place.”

Every meeting we went to for several weeks after, prospective clients had admired the campaign from afar.

And when friends and family, WhatsApp a pic of the coverage and say “was this u??” you know you're onto a winner.

## **WHY THIS CAMPAIGN SHOULD WIN**

For Guide Dogs, like most charities, value for money is everything. This super successful campaign was delivered on minimal costs- roughly £2,250 in total- but its impact was worth a fortune to Guide Dogs. We not only secured mass awareness, mass engagement and blanket coverage but delivered double the web visits and a 59%

increase in applications. What's more, this was for the Puppy Raisers programme which had existed for a long time and didn't have anything new to say. With glowing feedback from all internal stakeholders as well as multiple people externally, this was a best-in-class example of a low budget not for profit campaign.

*The text in this case study is presented as submitted in the original award entry. Where necessary, entrants have removed or redacted information considered sensitive or confidential.*