



CIPR PRIDE AWARDS 2014

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| Region: | South of England & Channel Islands |
| Category No. and Name: | 06. Low Budget Campaign |
| Entry Title: | 'Stop Bus Bullies: Launching The Vodden Report' |
| Name of Entrant Consultancy: | Wildwood Public Relations Ltd |
| Client Name: | Paul Vodden |

Brief and Objectives

On the 12th of December 2006, Paul Vodden's 11 year old son Ben, tragically took his own life after being repeatedly bullied on the school bus. Since then Paul has campaigned tirelessly to raise awareness of bullying on school buses. His dedication inspired the Wildwood team who became closely involved with the Vodden family, after handling the media interest following Ben's death.

In January 2014, Paul contacted Wildwood to enlist our support to launch an ambitious new report into the widespread issue of bullying on dedicated school buses. He was unsure how to engage media interest and bring the report to a wider audience.

The report had been developed by Paul, in conjunction with The Diana Award, a charity set up to empower young people to tackle social issues such as bullying.

Our role was to create a new campaign which would rally influential support, raise awareness of the issue, provoke discussion, inspire change and place it firmly on the news agenda.

Strategy and Tactics

With minimal budget, we had to think creatively and strategically about how best to launch the report to a national audience.

Whilst the report contained some powerful raw data, we recommended packaging it into a more 'media-friendly' format, which would draw attention to the powerful findings and make our audience take notice.

Wildwood worked closely with our designer, to develop a visual brand identity for the campaign. Vibrant yellow was chosen as an impactful, standout colour to link the visual elements of the campaign and inspired the logo. It was also used to create the look and feel of the finished report.

Leveraging Paul's existing network of contacts in the anti-bullying charity sector, we reached out to encourage their support. All of them were keen to become involved and give official backing to the launch – including offering case studies, logos and media spokespeople. The logos of established anti-bullying charities such as Kidscape and BullyingUK helped enormously to build credibility and lend the report the gravitas it deserved.

Wildwood identified the need for a platform to launch the campaign and put it into context. Paul's speaking engagement at the high-profile national BUSK¹ "Transport Safety Conference" on Tuesday April 1st, provided an ideal opportunity to launch the report to an auditorium of influencers and opinion-leaders in the education sector and transport industry.

We drafted comprehensive press materials, including a news release with a powerful call to action for greater vigilance on school buses, and revealed a series of recommendations which education authorities were urged to consider. We also utilised the most provocative statistics from the report to gain media attention.

Wildwood lobbied Paul Vodden's local MP in Broadstone Dorset, Annette Brooke, for support. Inspired by his story, Mrs Brooke used the report in an adjournment debate in Parliament. As a result of this, Mrs Brooke and Paul met with Elizabeth Truss, Minister for Education, who received the report on behalf of the government. Elizabeth Truss shared her view that there is an urgent need for more parent power and a change in ethos.

Implementation

Our media strategy was carefully staggered to build towards the launch date at the conference:

- Stage 1: Forward Planning desks - media outreach to schedule interviews for launch date.
- Stage 2: Engaging national and regional print media with a focus on the relevant local regions.
- Stage 3: Specialist press media outreach - including transport and education press.

On launch day – 1st April 2014 - both BBC South and ITV Meridian used the Vodden Report as the lead story which ran on news bulletins throughout the day. We lined up BBC radio interviews from a regional studio and Paul took part in 8 radio interviews to discuss the campaign.

To give longevity to the campaign we also kept back some stats from the report for an in-depth feature on BBC Breakfast. We worked closely with the BBC to arrange case studies and spokespeople to give fresh angles to the piece which was broadcast on 9th May and used throughout the programme.

Social media played a key role and proved a cost-effective way of reaching out to a wide audience. It became a compelling tool to engage and communicate with our audience. The Wildwood team set up a Twitter and Facebook campaign page to encourage online discussion and spread our message via online networks:

<https://twitter.com/VoddenReport>

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Vodden-Report/783504091679480>

¹ BUSK is a national organisation which campaigns for safe child road transport.

Demonstrate the cost-effectiveness of this particular campaign

Due to Wildwood's long standing relationship with Paul and the Vodden family, and our passion for supporting such an important cause, we worked on this campaign totally free of charge.

We therefore ran a tight budget for this campaign, thanks to the generosity of the suppliers such as our design partner who created the report for no fee and Precise media monitoring, who supplied the coverage as a free trial. We kept costs to an absolute minimum, only spending on a print run for copies of the report.

Research, planning, measurement and evaluation

Outputs

- The Vodden Report – an in-depth study of bullying on school buses
- Comprehensive press pack including media materials and supporting photography
- Facebook and Twitter Campaign pages
- Media launch event at the BUSK conference

Outcomes

A significant amount of media coverage was achieved, including:

- 9 pieces of national broadcast coverage including BBC Breakfast and Radio 5 Live
- 35 pieces of regional broadcast including BBC Points West and ITV Meridian
- 10 pieces of regional print coverage
- 2 pieces of trade coverage
- 33 pieces of online coverage (including 2 pieces in the Daily Telegraph online)

Since the launch, Paul has continued his dialogue with the UK's leading anti-bullying charities, creating an informal cross-charity initiative, as they continue to campaign to raise awareness of bullying on school buses and address what can be done to tackle it.

Paul has become a significant influencer in the safe school transport sector and has been invited to take part in the global conference 'Interchangeability 2014'.

Budgeting Process

Because the campaign was conducted 'pro-bono', including all of the team's time, the budgets were very low, resulting in under £1,000 being spent in total.

Word count 1,000 words (not including section headings)