



CIPR PRIDE AWARDS 2014 ENTRY DETAILS

Agency

Grayling

Category

Community Relations Campaign

Region

Yorkshire & Lincolnshire

Name of Client

Marks & Spencer

Entry Title

Plan A – because there is no Plan B

Dates

November 2013 – May 2014

Brief & Objectives

M&S launched its sustainability programme, Plan A, in 2007, with the goal of becoming the world's most sustainable major retailer. Through Plan A, M&S works with suppliers and employees to innovate, inspire customers and engage with local communities.

In the build up to the launch of Plan A 2020, a revised set of commitments, Grayling was briefed to enhance community engagement with Plan A in Yorkshire and the North West. The activity needed to:

- Generate regional media coverage
- Galvanise local communities into action
- Position M&S as a responsible business and highlight its sustainability credentials
- Engage stakeholder groups

Individual measureable KPIs were set to analyse the campaign (see chart).

Strategy, Tactics & Implementation

Grayling identified two peaks of activity during the six month period that would provide a call to action to encourage communities to get involved (Big Beach Clean-Up) and introduce sustainable credentials to new communities (York store launch). This was underpinned by a wider press office function to highlight ongoing Plan A collaboration and success.

1. BIG BEACH CLEAN-UP

Each year, M&S works in partnership with the Marine Conservation Society on Big Beach Clean-Up. The project is a high profile illustration of Plan A at work and aims to clean 113 beaches around the UK to alleviate harmful impacts of litter.

Grayling devised an integrated communications campaign comprising media relations, stakeholder engagement and social media/blogger outreach.

Media relations and social media were used to drive widespread registrations for the event. All materials included a strong call to action, clearly encouraging communities to participate. A two-tiered approach enabled us to maximise media opportunities at the gold beach and the 15 non-gold beaches within the constraints of a limited budget/time. Tactics included:

- A three-phased programme to generate pre-event registrations and post-event coverage.
- A call for volunteers six weeks before the event. This was followed by a reminder story alongside a creative photocall with the local

mayor to illustrate influencer endorsement two weeks before.

- Partnership with a community radio station to generate repeat messaging and interview opportunities at the event.
- Press call at the beach with spokespeople interviews and creative photographs of volunteers with unusual litter found, such as badminton racquets and tyres, in order to secure post event coverage.
- A template announcement release was issued for non-gold beaches six weeks before.
- Bloggers invited to participate and encouraged to write about the event in advance.
- Media, bloggers and stakeholders encouraged to Tweet to build online momentum and discussion.

Grayling recognised that the event offered a strong opportunity **to engage and influence local stakeholders, community organisations and opinion formers**. Our approach was to identify and engage a variety of influencers at a grass roots level to gain their support for the event and communicate to others via their own channels. Tactics included:

- Research of local influencers eight weeks out including MPs, Councillors, Community Groups, Schools and Conservation groups
- Invitations to participate and invite others to the gold beach

Community Benefits – The project resulted in **4 tonnes of rubbish** removed from the coastline of 16 beaches around North West/Yorkshire – significantly improving the environment and appearance of beaches for the communities that use them.

2. YORK STORE LAUNCH

In April 2014, M&S opened a new sustainable learning store in York. The store is one of only two in the North of England with a wide range of eco features, including a 60,000 litre tank that recycles rainwater, two green living walls designed to attract wildlife and 600 solar panels.

A media relations programme was devised. Tactics included:

- Store's Plan A credentials were included in all launch media materials to maximise opportunities to reach local audiences.
- A specific Plan A release following the store launch announcement focused on the eco features and community benefits. This was issued alongside a creative image of M&S signage being erected at the nearest point to the green living wall.

- An exclusive interview was set up with the York Press and Head of Plan A to provide an in-depth briefing and platform for coverage that delivered multiple key messages.
- To reach local influencers, we worked with the retail park developer to host a store tour for local stakeholders pre-launch.
- An exclusive store tour with the York Press post event as a follow on from the exclusive interview, in order to reach repeat audiences, reiterate key messages and demonstrate long term commitment

Community Benefits – Launching Vangarde has offered long term commitment to community collaboration and a holistic approach to sustainability at the only Sustainable Learning Store in Yorkshire, as well as creating jobs.

3. PRESS OFFICE

The press office underpinned peak activity to consistently deliver key messages to communities. The activity aimed to galvanise participation in Plan A and celebrate individual Plan A successes. Tactics included:

- Letter to editors issued to local press to call on communities to support charity partner Shelter.
- Case studies developed and issued to regional media to highlight the benefits of M&S' partnership with the Woodland Trust.

- Press releases devised to highlight local store charity achievements, such as the Harrogate store raising £20k for St Michael's Hospice.
- Arranged exclusive interview for the Yorkshire Post with the M&S chairman and director of Plan A to celebrate the unveiling of a sculpture in Leeds that commemorated the M&S 5p carrier bag charge. By facilitating an interview, we were able to communicate the wider impact of Plan A, while highlighting tangible results at a local level.
- Plan A elements woven into all store launch activity, including a competition for a school in Chester to win sponsorship from M&S and a Shopping event in York, in which 200kg of unused clothes were collected and recycled.

Budget

Circa £16k (agency fee and cost)

Evaluation

All objectives were met or exceeded, as the table shows:

Research, Planning, Measurement & Evaluation

Objective	Measurement / Target	Outtakes & Impact
Generate regional media coverage	Generate coverage for the gold and 15 non-gold beaches	31 pieces of coverage secured across pre & post event with reach of 2.5 million
	Generate media coverage pre and post launch at York store launch	42 pieces of coverage secured pre & post event with reach of 7.7 million
	Media reach	121 pieces of coverage across campaign in NW/Yorks with reach in excess of 16 million
Galvanise local communities into action	Help recruit more than 100 volunteers to the region's gold beach in Blackpool	150 volunteers at the gold beach – up 50% on 2013 951 volunteers across 16 beaches
	Collect more than 250kg of rubbish at the gold beach	345kg of rubbish collected at gold beach – a third more than target 4 tonnes collected across 16 beaches
	Beach clean coverage including call to action	100% of media coverage included call to action
Position M&S as a responsible business and highlight its sustainability credentials	Introduce Plan A to the community in York and highlight long term commitment to the area	M&S Head of Plan A was invited to participate in a local council sustainability forum as a result of the PR activity, introducing Plan A to a wider audience and securing future community engagement opportunities
	Delivery of Plan A message in media coverage	Plan A message communicated in 100% of coverage York – 7 feature pieces communicated at least 3 key messages
	Tone of coverage	100% of coverage was positive
Engage stakeholder groups	Beach - Engage at least 2 local stakeholder groups Clean	11 stakeholder groups – four times the target - attended the gold beach including St Anne's Women's Institute, SeaLife, Lytham Rotary Club and two local primary schools
	York stakeholder event attendance	More than 60 local stakeholders including Mayor attended
	Beach retweets & blogger engagement	22 retweets from stakeholders and 1 blogger attended event