

The background of the entire page is a complex, abstract geometric composition. It features overlapping translucent shapes in various shades of blue, yellow, and white. Some shapes are solid, while others contain patterns like polka dots or concentric circles. The overall effect is a dynamic, layered, and textured visual field.

AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN **PUBLIC RELATIONS 2019**

Best Communications Campaign by a Not-for-Profit Organisation



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Campaign

How is that Doggie in the Window?

Description of Campaign

#DoggieInTheWindow was a multifaceted Media Relations and Marketing campaign by Dogs Trust to evoke revolution to the rhetoric on Puppy Farming issues, from one of despair to one of hope. The goal was to help end the cruelty behind bad breeding by asking people to sign a petition to effect legislative change.



Organisation

Dogs Trust Ireland

Background to the Campaign

"A dog is for life, not just for Christmas ®" was coined by Dogs Trust 40 years ago and sadly it is just as relevant today. Every year, Dogs Trust launches a campaign coming up to Christmas as unfortunately this is a time of year when people are more likely to rush out to buy a puppy as a gift.

Due to the ongoing demand for designer dogs, Ireland is facing a chronic epidemic of irresponsible breeders capitalising on this demand for profit without due consideration for the welfare of the dogs in their care. As a result, Ireland has a deeply shameful reputation of being the 'Puppy Farm Capital of Europe'. At any given point there are tens of thousands of advertisements selling dogs in Ireland, many of which are disguising unscrupulous breeders who are looking to make a quick profit. The business challenge we face is the fall out; rescuing vulnerable, tormented mums and pups from this trade which inspired the idea for this campaign.

To help end the cruelty behind bad breeding, Dogs Trust launched a poignant petition campaign entitled "**How** is That Doggie in the Window?" to highlight the brutality that goes on behind closed doors on puppy farms and to build

a grass roots movement putting public pressure on Irish Government to review and strengthen the Dog Breeding Establishment Act 2010.

“**How** is that Doggie in the Window?” represents the many “shop front” windows that unscrupulous breeders can use to sell their dogs, such as the internet, social media, newspaper classifieds and trade fairs. Many people wouldn’t buy their dog from a pet shop anymore and thankfully there are very few, if any, that still sell dogs in Ireland. However, as we evolve in this digital era, unscrupulous breeders are finding other “shop front” windows to sell dogs for a quick profit.

Using a PR and Communications strategy that cut right across the marketing mix, our goal was to expose this vile trade and educate the public on where their cute new puppy could actually come from in order to evoke real change and save lives.

Statement of Objectives

The campaign primary objective was twofold, to help end the cruelty behind bad breeding through education and legislative change, while also growing vital financial support to fund our life-saving work.

Specific campaign objectives were as follows:

1. To see the current Dog Breeding Establishment Act 2010 reviewed to include a robust legislative framework.
Goal: 25,000 petition signatures to garner support from Minister of State, Sean Canney.
2. To generate high profile media coverage cross national media, focusing our efforts on achieving significant national TV coverage.
Goal: to reach 4 million people across Ireland.
3. To drive traffic to our petition webpage which educates the public about the cruelty behind bad breeding and how they can take action to effect change.
Goal: 10,000 page views.
4. To generate exposure for #doggieinthewindow across social media.
Goal: to reach 300,000 people, 700,000 impressions and 200,000 video views.
5. Recruit new monthly donors via direct debit.
Goal: 200 donors.
6. To increase online donations.
Goal: Increase by 50% from same period last year (November to January).
7. To increase our brand metrics.
Goal: Increase by 2%.
8. To educate our two primary target audiences. Warm supporters and dog lovers were targeted to sign our petition, while people looking to buy a dog for Christmas were targeted with our educational key messaging.

It was important that our campaign objectives were in keeping with our business objectives and mission statement.

The following business objectives were carefully implemented across all aspects of this campaign:

1. Highlight the upsetting reality behind irresponsible dog breeders.
2. Create an attitudinal change towards buying a dog without doing careful research first.
3. Reinforce Dogs Trust’s slogan “A dog is for life, not just for Christmas ®”.
4. Instil preventative measures to fulfil Dogs Trust’s mission; “To bring about the day when all dogs can enjoy a happy life free from the threat of unnecessary destruction.”

Programme Planning and Strategy

The campaign was led by the in-house Communications and Fundraising teams, who created, developed and implemented the PR and Marketing strategy and oversaw all aspects of campaign delivery.

The challenge that we faced was to create a campaign that was compelling and stood out at the busiest time of year for brands and charities alike. We needed to create a multifaceted media relations campaign to reach and captivate the Irish public. As the reality of puppy farms is of an upsetting nature, the right balance of emotion needed to be portrayed in this campaign without deterring people from participating in this movement.

Identifying Target and Media Audiences

Although the epidemic of puppy farming affects people of all ages and backgrounds in Ireland, we narrowed the target audience to the following:

- Our extensive and existing dog loving supporter base. Having previously tested supporter engagement through research and surveys we knew this audience would be warm to supporting our cause.
- Dog Lovers – people who are passionate about dogs and have an interest in animal welfare.
- Parents, particularly those who have young children that might ask for a dog at Christmas.
- Women and Men, aged 25-35 who would be thinking of getting their first dog having just moved out of the parental home.
- Our key media focus was identified as national and regional, with an emphasis on securing a national TV appearance, Radio News Bulletins and National Newspaper coverage.

Campaign planning

To better understand the challenges we faced, we first conducted Behaviour & Attitudes Market Research, which uncovered a disconnection between people's attitudes towards puppy farms and buying behaviour. 74% of people said they would be deterred if they knew their puppy came from a puppy farm; however, 45% of buyers took no steps to ensure their puppy didn't come from one.

Key messaging

We developed emotive and informative key messages highlighting the horror of rogue dog breeders to convince our audience to take action. To have maximum emotive impact, we selected one dog from the twenty-five that were rescued from an illegal dog breeding establishment as the face of the campaign. 'Aggie' stood out as a particularly sad case and was selected to communicate our messaging from the perspective of a survivor of this callous trade.

Campaign Delivery

PR Strategy

The PR and Communications strategy was a crucial tool that cut right across the marketing mix with tactics including a targeted press releases and content, strategic use of social media and digital platforms, compelling case studies, experiential marketing stunts, leveraging user generated content and garnering influencers.

Independent freelance journalists were selected and provided the opportunity for an exclusive on different case studies, which they pitched to National newspapers. Nicola Bardon, from The Irish Sun was given an exclusive and a tour of Dogs Trust Rehoming Centre where she brought along a photographer to do a main feature piece on some of our puppies and mums that were recently rescued. This plan worked extremely well, having secured several pieces of coverage in national newspapers including, The Irish Times "Picture of the Day", The Times Ireland, Irish Independent, The Daily Mail, The Sun, The Star, The Mirror and Irish Examiner as well as multiple radio news bulletins (national and regional) and online articles, at no cost to the charity.

At the outset, we identified RTÉ One's 'The Late Late Show' as a key target being the most watched television show in Ireland. We approached them and pitched 5 compelling stories of dogs who were rescued from a puppy farm to highlight our campaign and get our key messages out to over 1 million people. We secured a 15-minute slot on the show which was also promoted across RTÉ as well as national and online media in the days leading up to broadcast.

Utilising stealth marketing, we created an eye-catching window display on South William Street to demonstrate the horrendous reality behind bad breeding. The outside design was an old-fashioned bright, colourful sweet shop style, but with a dark, dreary recreation of a puppy farm on the inside, to represent the manipulative techniques used in advertisements versus the reality.

Hundreds of advent calendars were created and sent to key media, politicians, influencers and stakeholders, featuring 25 dogs that we had recently rescued from a puppy farm, representing the 25 days of Christmas. Each window revealed a picture of one dog and their associated medical or behavioural issue to demonstrate how these dogs can suffer as a result of poor breeding practices.

Online and Social Conversation

To drive the online conversation, we created the hashtag #DoggieInTheWindow which trended in Ireland on Twitter the day we launched.

Prior to the campaign launch, we reached out to Irish Celebrities and Influencers and asked if they would be advocates

for us and share and tweet about our campaign using #DoggieInTheWindow. Celebrities tweeting about our campaign included Maia Dunphy, Grainne Seoige, PJ Gallagher, Holly Carpenter and many more!

We created targeted lead ads on Facebook using captivating and emotive storytelling to convey the heart-breaking anguish that our 25 dogs endured before being rescued.

The entire stunt was filmed, and a heartfelt video was created and published across social media.

Brand Building

To complement our donor retention strategy, a detailed supporter journey was employed, re-targeting engagers with compelling storytelling.

Our strategy relied on a solid ECRM and E-marketing campaign, generating and funnelling leads through a triggered email journey and social content interlinked with financial giving opportunities.

We utilised content and relationship marketing techniques to enhance exciting relationships with our supporters and improve brand loyalty. We varied targeting between cold audiences, warm audiences and lookalikes; extensively testing and re-testing a range of creatives to determine our best performing adverts on selected counties before our national launch.

We planned content to connect with our existing supporters and new dog loving audiences through shared values, to form brand affinity and lasting emotional connections with the charity.

Measurement

Not only did we meet our objectives for this campaign, it exceeded all expectations.

Goal: 1: 25,000 petition signatures.

Achieved: Signatures currently stand at over 55,000. Within a week of delivering the petition, the Government announced their intention to review and strengthen the Dog Breeding Establishment Act 2010.

Goal: 2: Reach 4 million people through media coverage.

Achieved: Featured in 10 national newspapers, 6 regional, 14 news bulletins and over 30 online publications reaching over 6 million people. The Late Late Show slot alone reached over 1.3 million people!

Goal: 3: 10,000 page views to our petition webpage.

Achieved: 11,649 page views.

Goal: 4: To reach 300,000 people across social media and 200,000 video views.

Achieved: Through the continued monitoring and use of engaging content the campaign has reached over 1.5 million impressions, 792,078 reach and a phenomenal 2.62% CTR per impression overall, through our online and social media strategy. We had over 288,000 people view our campaign video.

Goal: 5: Recruit 200 new monthly donors via direct debit.

Achieved: We have recruited over 1,100 new regular donors with a gross LTV of over €600,000. Over 200 new cash donors have also donated via a secondary ask. We gained over 6,000 new email supporters, who are placed on a supporter journey to convert to donors with both cash and monthly giving asks.

Goal: 6: To increase online donations by 50% from same period last year (November to January).

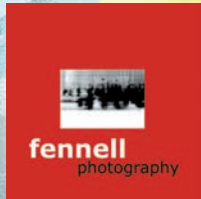
Achieved: Online donations increased +107% and income by +69%.

Goal: 7: Increase our brand metrics by 2%.

Achieved: Our brand attribution went from 92% to 96% that period (results published by the Irish Charity Engagement Monitor)

Goal: 8: Educate our two primary target audiences.

Achieved: With a combined PR and social media reach of 6.7 million people across Ireland, we have successfully spread our key messages to our target audiences.



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