

2015 PRISM AWARDS – COMMUNITY RELATIONS

The Street Store

M&C Saatchi Abel

The Haven Night Shelter tasked us to bring in donations on a R5000 budget. But the haves fear the homeless, and the homeless feel the haves are blind to their plight. We needed to bring people together and overcome deep-set social stereotypes. So we created The Street Store – the world’s first rent-free, premises-free, free “pop-up clothing store for the homeless” found entirely on the street and stocked by donations. We then went open-source online allowing anyone in the world to host a store of their own. We generated R41million in PR and more importantly, 163 stores have popped up globally.

State of the Problem 10

Our client, The Haven Night Shelter, reintegrate the homeless into functional society by providing clothing, shelter and support. They have a low level of ‘brand’ awareness, without communication funds that can compete in the broadcast arena. They briefed us to generate awareness and bring in donations on a limited budget of R5,000.

There are numerous reasons people are unwilling to donate:

- 1) They aren’t sure how or where to donate.
- 2) They have been warned to avoid giving to the homeless, as it perpetuates the problem of begging.
- 3) They fear the homeless.

On the other hand, after being constantly ignored, the homeless begin to dehumanise the “haves” and begin to see them as nothing but pockets – making it easier to beg.

Research 15

We needed to bring the ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots’ together to break through deep-set stereotypes, while making donating easy, and receiving dignified. By meaningfully demystifying the homeless culture, we’d get people to donate now, and in the future. We targeted two distinct audiences – young people who haven’t considered donating before; and those who want to donate, but aren’t sure where, how, or are weary of the unknown. Our third audience, a previously ‘unmarketable group’ were the homeless.

The success of the campaign depended on its ability to capture attention, by overcoming challenges such as audience fragmentation and advertising clutter. It needed to be seen in a positive light, not donation via “feel bad techniques” or shock tactics, but tapping into the goodness in people’s hearts.

A powerful series of call to action projects were needed, to merge two totally disparate worlds in a positive and empowering way.

Planning 25

In order to gain maximum exposure and conversation on a budget of R5000, social media was identified as the key vehicle to gain campaign impact and exposure. To launch the campaign, a twitter account was created @TheStreetStore. The plan was to subtly launch Cape Town's next "pop-up store" without initially exposing the details of it being an effort to clothe the homeless. In this way, a key, high interest topic of pop culture was tapped into – pop up clothing stores. A list of key influential South African blogs and influencers was drawn up, and both followed and tweeted at from @TheStreetStore. The initial message to this audience was single minded and focused – to watch this space for more information of South Africa's latest pop up store. Within days, @TheStreetStore was trending both in Cape Town and nationally as interest started to spike. Using this plan, national TV and radio stations made contact, and the coverage began. Influential bloggers and individuals then began spreading the message further. This enabled the larger plan to then come into fruition, as the public starting following the story as we slowly started releasing more information about The Street Store being an effort to clothe the homeless. The criterion for success was simple – to create as much curiosity around The Street Store before the first store was launched. The measure of success for this was deemed to be the amount of followers gained on the twitter and Facebook page. By the time the first store launched, we had 2 fully engaged communities, spreading the message about The Street Store even further to their networks.

Execution 25

M&C Saatchi Abel created The Street Store - the world's first rent-free, premises-free, free "pop-up clothing store for the homeless", found entirely on the street and stocked by donations.

The budget was spent printing raw cardboard and one-colour print posters to demarcate the "shop" floor. These die-cut posters were interactive and doubled up as hangers where donors could hang up their donations. The Haven residents and field-workers became volunteer shop assistants and helped screen participants off the street. Participants were allowed to choose three items of clothing from the street side 'racks'.

This on-the-ground experience formed the heart of the campaign that reached a broader audience via social media. It would never have reached the scale it did, without using Twitter for its sharability and scope and Facebook for it's album and event-hosting capabilities.

Since homelessness is a global issue, we went open-source – allowing anyone in the world to host a Street Store in their community. All The Street Store files and a step-by-step guide is available on www.thestreetstore.org.

In South Africa alone over 6000 homeless people have been clothed in South Africa alone. The idea then went global, generating over R41 million in PR value, and 19 018 157 exposures internationally. To date, 2286 applications are in the pipeline and 163 stores have taken place.

Evaluation 25

There is an immense amount of fluidity between the streets and townships in Cape Town, however The Haven estimates there are approximately 7,000 people sleeping on the streets at any given time. The first street store distributed exactly 1,500 items of clothing to 500 people between 06:30 am and 12:00 noon. When the day closed at 19:30, 3,000 items of clothing had been distributed to 1,000 people. That is 14% of the homeless population in one activation. Since then another 163 projects have run globally. *Please refer to Appendix A for a complete list of applications*

The Haven has seen a surge in direct donations since the activations. On average, one bag of clothes is donated daily. Since the Street Store project, this has increased threefold, and givers directly reference The Street Store when they drop off the clothes.

See figure 1 attached for a list of Haven Night Shelters and average pre and post campaign donations.

Media Interest around the project has been significant. We have counted radio interviews, press articles, television coverage and online articles. Using media audience measurement tools, we were able to quantify the minimum value and penetration of exposure as follows:

See figure 2 for a full list of TV, Radio & Print exposures.

An audit of the further international & local coverage received, revealed a further 19 018 157 people were reached. *Please refer to Appendix B for links to the all coverage received, both local and global.*

See figure 3 for a full list of online exposure & unique views.