

2019 PRISM Awards

Category: Healthcare – For an outstanding public relations campaign in the pharmaceuticals or healthcare industry

Client: South African National Blood Service

Campaign: #NewBlood

Agency: Flow Communications

Executive summary

For this campaign, the results of our work were literally the difference between life and death.

On 21 March 2018, the South African National Blood Service (SANBS) needed to triple the number of donations normally received on a public holiday, to ensure the safety of the nation's blood supply.

We did it! In one day, across South Africa, 5 482 people donated blood, with 6 730 people attending blood drives or donor centres nationally. Most importantly, we saved the lives of just under 16 500 people – not bad for a day's work.



Blood donors donating in Pretoria



Two blood donors donating at one of the blood drives

Statement of problem/opportunity

The SANBS is a not-for-profit that relies on donations of blood, operating everywhere in South Africa except the Western Cape.

Over holiday periods, the SANBS experiences a shortage of blood because there are fewer donors – they have gone on holiday and don't know where to donate.

To redress this, on 21 March 2018, we had to deliver communications that tripled the number of donations normally received on a public holiday, and make sure that donations received were from new or lapsed donors, in order to help safeguard the nation's blood supply.

Research conducted

We investigated:

1. Why people donate blood.
2. Why people donate at all.
3. What would stop people donating blood.

Desktop research was conducted – an extensive review of publications (see supporting documents) – **which suggested that having a positive attitude toward blood donation is associated with greater willingness to donate blood.**

This was echoed by the results of a 2015 CAF study¹. Nine out of 10 South Africans give time or money to charitable causes, but prefer to support individuals or initiatives in a small community – most likely because they see the direct result of their donation or efforts.

While the SANBS doesn't ask for money, donating blood takes time, and, of course, blood – both of which people are often reluctant to part with. The CAF study suggests that time is the most reluctantly given.

WHAT IS GIVEN

those giving in each way at least once in the previous 3 months



The SANBS deals with various myths that make people reluctant to donate blood, including the myth that it makes a profit from selling blood.²

Many people are frightened or otherwise put off by the donation experience. Our campaign needed to counter all of these challenges.

Planning

The campaign's business objectives were:

- Secure sufficient blood stocks for Easter 2018
- Secure donations from people who have donated before, and from first-time donors

¹ "I believe I can make a difference, individual giving by ordinary people", CAF Southern Africa, 2015 – <https://www.cafonline.org/docs/default-source/about-us-publications/cafsouthernafrica-individualgiving2015.pdf>

²<https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/south-africa/2018-01-15-heres-why-your-donated-blood-is-being-sold/>, and <https://www.pressreader.com/south-africa/pretoria-news/20180110/281539406353221>

Our SMART objectives were:

- Collect 4 500 units of blood on Human Rights Day, three times the usual amount for a public holiday³
- Attract new donors and reinvigorate lapsed donors
- Raise awareness of the increased target from 3 days 4 days blood supply
- Bring in Group 0 blood
- ROI of R5 for every R1 spent
- A broad spread of media
- Reach more than 20% of South Africa
- Increase traction on the SANBS social media platforms

The majority of the SANBS donor base are white South Africans (43%), and almost half of donors are older than 31. While there is year-on-year growth in black donors, there is a huge drop-off in donor retention once donors leave school. This is attributed to a lack of knowledge as to where and how young people can donate.

The target audience, therefore, was new or lapsed donors living in major metropolitan areas, with a key focus on black South Africans and consideration for all racial groups.

Around the campaign dates⁴ there was a general air of regeneration, renewal and rejuvenation in South Africa. The nation was enjoying the buoyancy that comes with a fresh start; South Africa was enjoying an ethos of “new blood”.

So the key message was:

Be the agent of change that the President has urged South Africans to be and become a blood donor.

Subsets of functional messages supported this message:

- This is where you donate
- This is how you donate
- This is what your blood donation does – 1 unit of blood can save 3 lives

Five sets of tactics were proposed:

³ On average, the SANBS collects around 3 000 units of blood a day. On a public holiday, this is normally 1 500 units.

⁴ 21 March and the week leading up to this.

- 1) A social media campaign designed for engagement using influencers, avatar frames and extensive community engagement.
- 2) A mini-website with a large empty heart, which filled up in real time on the day.
- 3) Taking donation centres to the people.
- 4) Media information drops and extensive media lobbying.
- 5) An internal campaign aimed at SANBS staff.

Budget

● Social media campaign	R146 000
● Blood donation meter on website	R54 000
● Design and content development	R12 000
● On the day	R19 200
● Total	R231 200

All media engagement was covered by the monthly retainer fee, which amounted to R46 800.00.

Execution

We hoped to make people part with their blood and time because:

- We made use of current conversation to draw attention to an issue
- People could see, in real time, the difference they were making by logging on to the website
- Instead of telling people where to donate, we asked them where they would like to donate

Timelines were incredibly tight – the plan was as follows:

Date	Action
8 March	Approvals
8-11 March	Develop: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Look and feel. 2) Scripts. 3) Media announcement.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4) Social media. 5) Website. 6) Intranet content.
12 March	Filming of CEO, Exco
12-20 March	Ongoing social media campaign
21 March	Joint Operational Committee in action: amplify, update and engage

As always, with such tight timelines, setbacks were experienced with approvals and availability of senior SANBS executives to sign off material. But overall, the campaign excited everyone enough that, through much expenditure of blood⁵, sweat and tears, by the time the day came, all the elements were in place and a buzz of excitement had been generated.

Additionally, during execution, we became aware that while taking donor centres to the public was a motivating idea, in some cases it was logistically impossible. Alterations to this plan had to be made bearing in mind the logistical challenges experienced by SANBS operations, and compromises had to be reached.

We also experienced some issues on the day with staff being too busy processing donors to supply the real-time donation figures required for regular updating of the blood meter, but this was overcome through sustained communication – and a little temporary guesswork. Luckily, we almost always underestimated and the meter was never too far off.

However, South Africa, and the SANBS staff, came to the party and queues at all donor centres stretched beyond the doors for most of the time, with an amazing frisson of excitement and a feeling that everyone had answered the President's call and were living *thuma mina*.

⁵ See what I did there?

Evaluation

- We did it! In one day, 5 482 people donated blood. Communications helped the SANBS exceed its target by 122%. Units donated were 347% up on number of units donated on that day in 2017
- 50.48% of donations came from new or lapsed donors. Of those new donors, 56.84% were black; 64.22% were younger than 41; and 40.46% were younger than 30
- O group donations accounted for 50.47% of the day's total donations
- Flow returned to SANBS 327 pieces of coverage across online, print and broadcast media. We reached 19 187 000 South Africans and delivered ROI of 1:30 (estimated AVE of R1 261 000)
- The campaign reached around 500 000 people on social media platforms, with more than 20 000 social engagements and 800 clicks to website from social platforms

Locals add to national blood target

Beacon Bay Donor Centre draws steady trickle

By BARBARA HOLLANDS

THE South African National Blood Service set out to collect 4 500 units of blood yesterday in a mass Human Rights Day blood drive.

It was also the start of the #New-Blood recruitment campaign yesterday, which was launched to encourage new donors and ensure sufficient stocks of safe blood, particularly in advance of the Easter holidays.

"Currently, less than 1% of South Africans donate blood, even though it demands little more than giving 30 minutes of their time at least twice a year," said SANBS chief marketing officer Silungile Mlambo.

"This means we often experience shortages, which place lives at risk." Mlambo said blood was needed to save the lives of premature babies, accident victims, women giving birth and patients fighting cancer.

She said yesterday's initiative was a response to President Cyril Ramaphosa's plea for people to become agents of change.

"Holidays are unfortunately the time when we traditionally run short of blood because we are not able to



EVERY DROP COUNTS: SA National Blood Service staffers Rene Vice and Michelle Luff ensure donors Charne Bester and Paul Webb are comfortable, while young Kurt Webb looks on at yesterday's national Human Rights Day blood drive

Picture: RANDELL ROSKRUISE

Coverage in Ladysmith Herald

SA joins hands and gives life

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THE South African National Blood Services ran a national #NewBlood mass blood drive on Human Rights Day that was targeted at donors who had never donated blood before. This comes after they released a plea to all South Africans leading up to the Easter holidays.

Chief marketing officer for the SANBS, Silungile Mlambo, said: "Currently less than one percent of South Africans donate blood even though it demands little more than giving up 30 minutes about four times a year."

This drive was set up to encourage South Africans to become donors as Easter holidays draw near. "Holidays are unfortunately the time when we traditionally run short of blood because we are not able to host our regular drives at schools and university campuses. But this year the SANBS wants to start turning things around. We want to lend a hand, as President Ramaphosa asked us to do, and ensure that there is enough safe blood available in the country. The #NewBlood campaign is asking you to lend us a hand by becoming a regular blood donor," said Mlambo.

The SANBS had aimed to collect 4 500 units of blood but South Africans were able to exceed that



Zee TV Miss India KZN 2016 Sovina Mahadaw donating blood at the recent SANBS #NewBlood drive on Human Rights Day.
PHOTO: SUPPLIED

"We hope that everyone who donated and all other eligible donors will donate regularly and help us save lives."

First-time donor Dineo Letele said: "I've always wanted to give blood but circumstances

Coverage in Amanzimtoti Fever