The CEO SleepOut™ South Africa engineering social change

The CEO SleepOut™ is a global movement which sees business elite sleep under the stars on one of the longest and coldest nights of the year to raise awareness and funds for the homeless. The movement was founded in 2006 by business leader Bernard Fehon in Sydney, Australia.

Ali Gregg, founder of The Philanthropic Collection, engaged Bernhard Fehon in 2012 to extend the concept to South Africa and imported The CEO SleepOut™ concept and brand from Australia. In 2015 the movement was officially launched in South Africa with The CEO SleepOut™ aspiring to ignite a new wave of philanthropy in South Africa to drive social change to assist with one of the country’s most pressing problems – vulnerable children and youth living on the streets. Girls & Boys Town was identified as the ideal Beneficiary Partner for the inaugural event.

“For the first time you’re actually experiencing the kind of suffering and struggle that you are trying to fund. The ability to do this is actually a unique opportunity. I am quite humbled by it”
Adrian Gore, CEO Discovery

Thursday, 18 June 2015 saw Gwen Lane in Johannesburg playing host to CEOs and business leaders, giving them the opportunity to experience life on the streets, meet with Girls & Boys Town alumni but most importantly to raise awareness and funds to drive social change. A month later the Stakeholder Auditing Partner BDO SA announced that a record-breaking R26 054 869 had been collected. It is the largest sum ever raised by a single South African charity event, while worldwide it is the largest amount of funds raised for any inaugural CEO SleepOut™ event.
Being an organisation, The CEO SleepOut™ had limited resources available and had to secure the services of several Partners, Sponsors and Friends – including logistics, hospitality, communications, media and measurement Partners. Sun International and Radio 702 (Joint Title Partner) were secured for the 2015 event.

The main strategy would be:

- Direct invitation to 800 key business leaders to participate
- Use Partners and Influencers that could target the key audience and provide the necessary endorsement
- Exposure and awareness of the event through nomination and challenge of peers in the media
- Create advance knowledge of the event as well as ongoing coverage leading up to the event
- Provide easy accessibility to information regarding the event incl. how to register, donate or challenge peers
- Create visibility for Participants and Partners through their association with the event
- Create a sustainable event which is viewed positively by the targeted audience and public
- Data would be collected and analysed across print, broadcast, online, social and owned media
- A Participant survey would be conducted
- All Media Products Survey (AMPS) data would be utilised

“A goal without a plan is just a wish” – Antoine de Saint-Exupery

“The CEO SleepOut™ approached Ornico to provide social media monitoring services for the event. Based on the initial engagement Ornico volunteered its full suite of monitoring and analytical services, identifying the opportunity to promote the Barcelona Principles by creating a best measurement practice showcase report – distributed to all participating CEOs and business leaders post-event.

The CEO SleepOut™ had very specific campaign objectives and Ornico guided the client further by using the AMEC Valid Metrics Framework, suggested for not-for-profit events. Specific metrics were identified which would assist the client in evaluating the performance of communications activities and the event. These included advocacy, key message alignment, knowledge transfer, target demographics and more.

“Goals are dreams with deadlines” – Diana Scharf Hunt
The CEO SleepOut™ made extensive use of its key media partner Radio 702 to drive coverage of the event, with individuals as well as specific shows being tracked against key metrics across both traditional and social media. On-air nominations as well as personal invitations to potential participants was a key strategy.

The AMEC Valid Metrics Framework formed the basis of the measurement and evaluation metrics for each key step of the communications phases and processes. Ornico’s monitoring capabilities enabled the data to be collected and collated with analysts providing the necessary qualitative insight and analysis.

Media
Each media item was assessed according to the following variables:

- Media source
- Title Partner and Sponsor mention
- Beneficiary Partner mention
- Stakeholder, Influencer and Friends mentions
- Companies mentioned
- Companies Challenged or Nominated
- Sympathy SleepOuts™ (other events arranged in support)
- Key message alignment
- Commitment and endorsement
- Knowledge Transfer - based on 8 variables
- Advocacy of event – based on 6 variables
- Tonality
- Prominence

Google Analytics and App user analysis
Ornico analysts were given direct access to The CEO SleepOut™ website and could track visitor activity in terms of frequency, bounce rate, region and sources of traffic. The CEO SleepOut™ App usage data was also collected and analysed.

Participant Survey
All the participants on the evening also completed a detailed survey for further analysis.
“Big results require big ambitions” - Heraclitus

The CEO SleepOut™ held in Johannesburg on 18 June 2015 now holds the record for the biggest ever single South African event. Ornico’s monitoring and evaluation services were utilised on a daily basis to keep track of developments and to adjust strategy accordingly – even ambush marketing attempts could be successfully thwarted.

Ornico’s research allowed The CEO SleepOut™ to demonstrate the effectiveness of the campaign and event as well as their ability to reach their set objectives. Results from the various measurements now allows them to plan for future campaigns by identifying effective channels as well as Partners. Some results include:

- 104% of target achieved in terms of funds raised (R26 054 869)
- 98% of participant target reached (247 CEOs and business leaders)
- 70% media coverage contained key message concerning the homeless and vulnerable
- 2015 showed an average monthly increase of 45% in media coverage focusing on the plight of the homeless after the event (measured across all 12 months)
- 74% overall positive sentiment
- 60% of CEO’s nominated on radio participated in the event
- 14 unofficial “Sympathy sleepOuts™” were held - as identified in analysed media
- The most successful participant recruitment channel was via direct invitation – 39%
- 43% of website traffic to www.theceosleepoutza.co.za was via direct access - more than any other referral channel
- High media advocacy for the event in analysed media items (7.2 / 10)
- Social media engagement of 3.4% on Twitter with an average of 9.4 likes and 1.9 shares per post on Facebook
- 4% negative coverage post-event – some feeling CEOs used event as PR exercise
- Channel performance across awareness, knowledge transfer and advocacy could be demonstrated
- Effectiveness of invitations and referrals vs media coverage could be demonstrated
- Key demographics of participants were collected
- Multiple measurement benchmarks were set

The Ornico Campaign Analysis Report was made available in an e-book format as well as a printed 48-page full colour report which was hand delivered to all Participants - reinforcing and providing independent evidence of the success of the event, as well as to encourage future participation. Additional research on media channels, prominent Influencers and Partner performance was also conducted in support of the main campaign analysis – guiding the communications and partner strategy for 2016.

Major changes include the omission of a main media Partner, rather focusing on smaller media partnerships plus a bigger focus on social media. The spontaneous “Sympathy SleepOuts™” identified showed great public support which will now be leveraged by launching up to 3 additional official “SleepOut™” brands in 2016.

Ornico has established measurement and evaluation as an integral part of The CEO SleepOut™ strategy and is a crucial Partner for the 2016 event. The report is a great showcase for Ornico to demonstrate the benefits of using best measurement and evaluation principles as dictated by the Barcelona Principles, Barcelona Principles 2.0 and the AMEC Valid Metrics Framework.