

# ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE:

Creating the fastest selling coin in Royal Mint history



The Royal Mint touches us all. It's a genuine, national institution with an illustrious 1,000 year history.

Our currency provider sells over 2,000 types of commemorative coins, but the vast majority are bought by people over 60. Which presents its marketing team with one overarching objective. Get younger people - *who've never bought coins before* - to buy.

When Porter Novelli (PN) became The Royal Mint's PR agency we offered one critical piece of advice. To engage a **new** generation of collectors The Royal Mint has to create *emotional* - as well as physical - currency. It has to make people care about coins.

This advice was put into practice with a new addition to *Great Britons*, an existing series of collectable coins featuring historical heavyweights such as Shakespeare, Churchill and Florence Nightingale. In 2010 The Royal Mint decided to add a new Great Briton to the line-up, and PN convinced them to open up the selection process, for the first time, to an online public vote which led to three clear **PR campaign objectives**:

- Drive public engagement with The Royal Mint via participation in the voting process
- Drive sales of the new addition to the range
- Attract critical 'acquisition customers' (first time buyers)

## Strategies

We deployed key strategies in three distinct phases:

- Phase 1: harness the power of online/local communities to drive engagement
- Phase 2: create stand out photography to generate pictorial coverage, amplifying the impact of the coin
- Phase 3: engage with key third parties to boost interest and give the story additional momentum

- And overall? Position The Royal Mint as a modern institution engaging in dialogue with the people it serves.

## Methods deployed

**Phase 1:** when the *Great Britons* candidate shortlist of Walter Raleigh, Emmeline Pankhurst, Douglas Bader, John Logie Baird, Jane Austen and John Lennon was confirmed, a blogger relations campaign kicked in to drive potential voters to The Royal Mint website. Quick hit research conducted by PN suggested Austen was the legend most likely to win public support, so the team used this to fuel debate and garner support, specifically targeting online communities, knowing that grass roots lobbying would be critical to generate interaction.

**Phase 1 outcomes:** coverage on key blogs including *Examiner.com*, *Beatles News*, *Gibson* and *austenprose* encouraged specialist online communities to vote for their own contender. Nationally *Dailyexpress.co.uk* and *BBC News* ran the story, while *Liverpoolecho.co.uk* supported their own working class hero. Interest peaked when Yoko Ono tweeted her support of Lennon to almost 1,000,000 followers.

When the July closing date arrived it became clear that the Beatle had triumphed, with a whopping 92% of the vote. At the height of activity The Royal Mint's website attracted almost 9,000 visits on one day. In total, more than 30,000 people visited the site to vote.

**Phase 2:** with Lennon officially confirmed as a *Great Briton* the next job was to launch his coin. PN recommended holding fire until nearer the anniversary of the Beatle's death. We then recruited a Lennon lookalike and briefed a jeweller to create a pair of trademark glasses, replacing the circular lenses with coins. On October 29<sup>th</sup> the British public's decision to commemorate Lennon on a UK coin was announced.

**Phase 2 outcomes:** the news went global within minutes via *The Washington Times*, *USA Today*, *ABC News*, *CBS News*, *India News*, *The West Australian* and *MTV*. In the UK *Sky News*, *BBC News*, *Mail.com*, *Mirror Online*, *Metro.co.uk* and *MSN* ran the story. Print coverage included *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Sun*, *The Daily Star* and *The Scotsman*. Yoko tweeted her delight. In total 257 stories generated a reach of 47,298,508.

The Royal Mint had produced 5,000 silver John Lennon £5 coins. **The coins sold out in ten days, the fastest sell out in Royal Mint history. Over 90% of sales came from acquisition customers.**

**Phase 3:** the success of the silver coin prompted The Royal Mint to quickly produce an additional run of Base Metal coins. The challenge for PN was to keep the story going, and this is where Yoko came in.

Through her tweets we knew she was engaged. So The Royal Mint produced a one-off gold Lennon coin, exclusively for her. The coin was despatched to Yoko in Tokyo for a photoshoot then she, in turn, donated it to Alder Hey children's hospital in Liverpool. To drive a third wave of coverage PN accompanied the coin 'on tour', giving Merseyside media a one off chance to handle it, before it was donated.

**Phase 3 outcomes:** chief designer Matt Bonaccorsi was interviewed on four Liverpool radio stations.

*The Liverpool Echo* and *Post* ran the story. Online coverage was generated on 33 sites. Yoko tweeted a picture of herself with the coin.

**An additional 5,047 coins were sold as a result.** The final day of sales – the anniversary of Lennon's death – saw a peak in online traffic with over 2,000 visits to The Royal Mint website after a final blogger push by the PN team.

### **Relation to objectives and cost effectiveness**

The *Great Britons* campaign generated **314** pieces of coverage with a reach of **58,175,216**.

#### **Objective 1: Drive public engagement with The Royal Mint via participation in the voting process**

Strategically placed coverage ensured that the voting process was seen by key audiences that hadn't before engaged with The Royal Mint. This drove more than 30,000 people to The Royal Mint website to vote.

#### **Objective 2: Drive sales of the new addition to the range**

The campaign delivered an ROI of 7:1. The activity was supported solely by PR.

#### **Objective 3: Attract critical 'acquisition customers'**

Over 90% of sales came from acquisition customers proving that our campaign not only drove engagement through The Royal Mint website, it also changed the behaviour of the target audience.

Matt Clark, the Royal Mint's Marketing Manager, described the campaign as: "*A genuine case study in how public engagement and social media can act as a truly cost effective acquisition channel and profitable sales mechanic.*"

Rarely can PR be seen to drive sales with such linear clarity. 30,000 voters... 90% of sales generated by new customers...an ROI of 7:1...the fastest selling coin in Royal Mint history.

*Imagine.*