**AMEC Global Communication Effectiveness Awards 2013**

**Category:** Single Event Evaluation      **Client:** Museum of London
**Entering Company Name:** Gorkana      **Campaign title:** Dickens and London Exhibition

### Objective/Brief

The Museum of London is a registered charity, which incorporates the Museum of London and Museum of London Docklands. The Museum of London tells the story of London, with more than two million objects in its collection and the largest archaeological archive in the world. More than 600,000 visit both museums each year.

One of the primary objectives for the Museum of London's communications team is doubling visitor numbers by 2015. To achieve this they have developed a multi stakeholder strategy focused around inspiring a passion for London. The team is tasked with increasing awareness and raising the profile of the Museum of London—to ultimately drive footfall—while developing its reputation for learning and expanding appreciation of *London's cultural heritage, its people and its stories*[1]. Major challenges facing the team include a relatively low public profile, the Museum of London's location and resource pressures. The opportunities for 2012, however, were exciting: London 2012; high quality exhibitions; digital developments and partnerships.

The Dickens and London Exhibition was held at the Museum of London and was strategically timed to coincide with the 200th anniversary of Dickens' birth as well as the London Olympics. The exhibition was groundbreaking in the way it was atmospherically staged to provide visitors with the tactile experience of walking the streets of London at night—as Dickens often did—and engage via sound, text, images and film.

To drive business success from this well timed and innovative exhibition, the communications plan ran the length of the exhibition and included *events for key public affairs audiences, media partnerships and contemporary art commissions*[1]. The team was keen to underpin and refine the strategy with data and insight, with the ultimate aim of understanding the impact of communications on visitor numbers.

The Museum of London chose Gorkana as it was able to demonstrate that evaluation of the campaign would be linked to business objectives, rather than simply supplying data. Gorkana's brief was to:
- Measure how the communications for the Dickens and London exhibition impacted on visitor numbers to the museum
- Evaluate the effectiveness of key message communication to target audiences through the Dickens in London PR campaign
- Measure brand perception and levels of awareness of the work of the Museum as a result of the Dickens in London exhibition
- Provide a competitive and normative benchmark for evaluation of future exhibitions and communication campaigns
- Create a measurement framework that applied learnings to the broader communications strategy

### Strategy

The research aims were extensive within the budget available demanding a creative approach. To generate insights around the event as well as the broader communications strategy the work was split into separate strands.

To evaluate the effectiveness of key message communication, the mainstream media content was analysed in depth for key message and core value communication. Market research was used to model accurate target audiences and understand if the right media had been targeted to reach the right audiences. Social media content was sourced to measure brand perception and awareness of the work of the museum as a result of the exhibition.

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[1] Dickens and London – one page communications plan

To inform the wider strategy, key social media conversations and influencers were identified around issues relating to the Museum of London such as funding, influencing policy and reputation management.

Within this, competitive intelligence on the Barbican Centre, Imperial War Museum and Natural History Museum was gleaned to provide success benchmarks for this and future campaigns. This strand was supplemented with market research to understand the media consumption habits of its key audiences.

Finally, with the core business outcome in mind, regression analysis was used to find a causal link between earned media activity and footfall during the Dickens and London exhibition.

## Execution/Implementation

### Strategic briefing
Gorkana's brief was aligned to the goals of the Dickens and London communication plan as well as the broader communications programme. Fundamental to this was understanding which messages (across public affairs, communications and Dickens) were targeted to which stakeholders and how the museum's values were being communicated to the media.

### Mainstream qualitative analysis
Mainstream media content was analysed by humans to ensure the nuances of messaging and brand value communication could be determined. This was cross referenced with market research (sample: 10,000 UK adults) into media consumption habits to understand if the right target audience has been reached with the right messages. This research was also used to disaggregate cross readership habits and accurately determine what proportion of target audiences has been exposed to content about the exhibition.

### Social media insights
Museum of London and competitor content was sourced from micro-blogs, blogs, video sites, social networks, discussion forums and image sites. The right streams of data were identified using complex search string methodology to remove false positives, spam and splogs. The Gorkana team defined categories to frame insights required and created detailed search strings to isolate content surrounding areas such as funding and policy.

Both social and mainstream analysis was combined to provide normative and competitive benchmarking for future campaigns.

### Influential voices
Within the relevant arts and culture content, prolific voices including top tweeters, bloggers and forum posters were identified. These individuals were then scored and ranked based on their reach, resonance and relevance to the Museum of London's core issues. This enabled Gorkana to isolate a relevant list of influential voices with which to engage. The research also found that the strongest advocates in social media were the public, who were keen to offer backing for exhibitions, plays and performances. Gorkana recommended that: *This people power means that one of the most positive steps the Museum of London can make in extending its reach and influence in social media is to interact in a positive way with its supporters (and potential supporters) in order to build a strong community that backs the museum and its aims[2].*

### Stakeholder targeting
The Gorkana Group used end user primary research (sample: 10,000 UK adults) to identify online target audience behaviours. The omnibus survey of the UK population accurately modeled the Museum of London's target audiences to gain insight into their social media attitudes and behaviours to inform strategy and tactics. Gorkana provided recommendations on how to best target five audiences, such as UK *Arts and Culture Charity Donors* and what approach might resonate best with them.

### Business outcomes
To understand how earned media impacted on exhibition visitor numbers, regression analysis was run over mainstream, social media and exhibition footfall. Causal links around specific activity were identified, for example, *peaks in coverage between 29th January and 11th February generated a surge of visitors to*

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[2] Social Media Audit – Museum of London

*the exhibition the following week, producing the highest number of visitors per week for the duration of the exhibition[3].*

The exhibition PR spend was also provided allowing the calculation of cost per thousand reached (£0.02) and cost per thousand visitors (£8.92).

***Strategic workshop and internal communication***
Alongside the creative methodology, the effective delivery made this work stand out.  The reporting was objective led and opened with a clear, objective-focused *Evaluation Summary Statement* (excerpt below) providing a snapshot of findings. The Gorkana team led a feedback session with the wider communications team to talk through the learnings and their application to future strategies.  At the invitation of the Museum of London, Gorkana held a wider workshop on evaluation strategies looking at how to best integrate and report on outcome data from across marketing, PR, and public affairs.

## Conclusions
The robust insights generated within a limited budgeted achieved a shift in business approach.  The normative and competitive benchmarking generated by the strands of research indicated that people are more attracted to exhibitions around iconic Londoners. The evaluation helped shape the Museum's development of its 2013 and 2014 exhibition schedule, which is now focusing on London icons such as Michael Caine and Sherlock Holmes.

Based on the findings of Gorkana's report, the Museum of London also made fundamental changes to its communications strategies and tactics.  Most importantly:
* The social media intelligence has been used as the basis for the development of the Museum's first social media strategy including Gorkana's recommendations on how to connect with target audiences and online influencers
* The museum's key messages have been consolidated from around 12 to three key messages. Exhibitions and campaigns are now given their own set of messages rather than being assigned tiered messaging across different communications disciplines and spokespeople have been given additional media training as a result of this shift.
* The communications team has submitted a budget for ongoing media evaluation by Gorkana, which will be objective-focused and integrate outcome measures against traditional and social media. It will include visitor survey results, visitor numbers, website visits, downloads of apps, and revenue generated. Gorkana will also map PR activities against paid, owned and earned media coverage.

Gorkana's conclusions and recommendations for the Dickens evaluation were outlined in the report evaluation summary statement: *"The Dickens and London Exhibition should be considered a success for the Museum of London. The communication activities drove impactful coverage which had a major focus on the museum of London and reached 80% or more of its target audiences. Coverage also drove visitor numbers with evidence of correlations between coverage peaks and increases in footfall."*

This project was a low budget, first foray into evaluation that has had a big impact on the organisation, not only in terms of its communications approach but also on the content and planning of future exhibitions. This was well set up, designed around business objectives, and ground breaking for the Museum of London, which had never undertaken evaluation of this nature before.

*"Throughout the process I was impressed by Gorkana's instinctive understanding of our brand and the need for a robust evaluation. By getting under the skin of the museum's proposition, the Gorkana team was able to provide me with genuinely useful insights, based on evidence, which has influenced the way we work. My personal objective is to thoroughly modernise the Museum of London's PR team and PR output, this initial step into the world of evaluation has been immensely valuable as part of the modernisation process."*

Andrew Marcus, Deputy Head of Communications

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[3] Media Evaluation Reporting – Museum of London – Dickens and London Exhibition