



AMEC International Communication Effectiveness Awards 2014 Entry Form

Category: Best use of measurement for a single event

Entering Company Name: Gorkana

Name of person entering: Paul Hender

Email: paul.hender@gorkana.co.uk

Telephone: 0207 674 0200

Client: Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A)

Campaign title: "David Bowie is"

Objective/Brief:

The Victoria and Albert Museum in London (V&A), is the world's greatest museum of art and design. As a non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, the Museum exists to educate and inspire people through art and design. Like other national British museums, entrance to the Museum has been free since 2001. Membership and ticketed exhibitions are essential for driving revenue and the V&A has large galleries devoted to temporary exhibitions; a typical year will see more than a dozen of these exhibitions staged.

In 2013 the V&A gained unprecedented access to the David Bowie Archive to curate the first international retrospective of the extraordinary career of an exceptional artist and performer. This flagship exhibition featured over 300 objects, including handwritten lyrics, original costumes and Bowie's own instruments. The V&A secured sponsorship from Gucci, with the sound experience that defined the exhibition brought in partnership with Sennheiser. Investment was significant, expectations were high and the opportunity, along with the pressure, to surpass previous successes was clear.

An extensive integrated marketing campaign was planned with the primary objective of achieving an exhibition visitor target of 230,000 between March and August 2013. Secondary objectives of attracting new audiences who have not previously been to the V&A along with achieving sponsor objectives supported the overall aim. The exhibition ran from 23rd March to 11th August 2013 and PR's role was well defined:

- Precede other marketing activities to generate excitement for the new exhibition
- Generate advance ticket sales as a key early revenue stream
- Communicate to a brand new audience, including potential global visitors, in order to bring new and returning visitors to the Museum
- Create inspiring content to match the quality of the exhibition
- Promote the partnership with sponsors to generate a return on their investment
- Work within the marketing mix to make '*David Bowie is*' the most talked about exhibition of the year

As an integral part of marketing communications, the PR team had to demonstrate the effectiveness of their work and integrate learnings into future exhibition strategies. Gorkana was appointed to achieve this by:

- Measuring the impact of PR on ticket sales to give a tangible value to the business
- Demonstrating effective outreach to new and diverse audiences



AMEC International Communication Effectiveness Awards 2014 Entry Form

- Providing effective information to help the Corporate Partnerships team justify sponsor investment and bring in future sponsorship revenue
- Providing a normative benchmark for evaluation of future exhibitions and insight to inform future strategies

Strategy:

Key to the ability to isolate the PR effect from the rest of the marketing mix was effective application of the activity timings mapped with the business outcome of ticket sales. The PR campaign led with a media launch in September 2012, long before other marketing activity was activated. Isolating the right pre-advertising data was the essential for disaggregating the PR effect. Regression analysis was used to find a causal link between PR activity and advance ticket sales.

To evaluate the effectiveness of reaching new and diverse audiences, the mainstream media content was analysed in depth based on defined impact and call to action KPIs. Market research was used to model accurate target audiences and understand if the right media had been targeted to engage the new and diverse audiences and convert them into visitors.

International content was sourced and analysed in native tongue from 37 countries to gauge interest and communications success in different markets. Importantly, the research was scoped to help inform the business decision about where to take the exhibition next.

To support the sponsor objectives, the proliferation of sponsor mentions were taken into consideration. This was mapped to market research to demonstrate the breadth of audiences reached by exhibition content that effectively communicated sponsor messaging and brand values.

Often overlooked, but crucial to the resonance of this research in the context of the *'David Bowie is'* exhibition, was the ability to make the information visually striking and easy to communicate to multiple audiences.

Execution/Implementation:

KPI measurement framework

Following an in-depth strategic briefing, Gorkana saw the opportunity to link PR and earned media efforts comprehensively to the V&A's business outcomes. To help with clarity and communication of PR's role with internal stakeholders, a measurement framework was devised, visualized and circulated (see appendix 1). This framework cascaded the overall business aims of the V&A through to the role of PR and finally down to well defined, qualitative earned media KPIs that would effectively demonstrate the link between content and business outcomes. This served as the first step to moving the senior management team away from more quantitative measures as an appraisal of PR success.

Mainstream qualitative analysis

Mainstream media content was reviewed and coded by human analysts in multiple languages to ensure nuances of V&A and sponsor messaging could be extracted. The KPI measurement



AMEC International Communication Effectiveness Awards 2014 Entry Form

framework defined the earned media content measures that were used. Critically, metrics tracking calls to action, including ticket details and website URLs were included. The V&A had the highest number of visitors it had ever seen during an opening week, which could be attributed to the earned media coverage

Audience targeting

The exhibition aimed to attract new music, fashion and performance fans who had not previously visited the V&A and were traditionally non-museum going audiences. Gorkana cross referenced the earned media content with market research (sample: 10,000 UK adults) into media consumption habits to determine if the right audiences had been reached. The research was also used to disaggregate cross readership habits and accurately determine if the target audiences had been exposed to messaging about the exhibition as well as content crediting the sponsors.

Music fans were a particular focus, a social group typically underrepresented in traditional museum visitors. The reporting demonstrated effective targeting and call to action communication to these new and diverse audiences (see appendix 2).

Sponsorship success

The sponsor mentions were isolated and individual research documents were created by Gorkana to target the individual sponsors. The reporting outlined delivery of the campaign against sponsor objectives to demonstrate return on the sponsor's investment as well as providing the Corporate Partnerships team with evidence of success to drive future investment.

The museum had a contractual obligation to provide a full exhibition report to the joint sponsors of the '*David Bowie is*' exhibition; Gucci and Sennheiser. This report evaluates the entire sponsorship including the V&A's campaign and promotion of the exhibition, as well as the benefits offered to the sponsors and how they were activated by the respective sponsors. The Gorkana analysis formed a crucial part of this final report.

Business outcomes

The '*David Bowie is*' campaign was launched by PR before other marketing activity was activated. The V&A sold over 67,000 tickets prior to the exhibition opening, more than three times the advance sales of any other V&A exhibition. Gorkana isolated the time period driven solely by PR and ran regression analysis to show a statistically significant correlation between media coverage and ticket sales. This was used to report upwards to the senior management team, successfully generating a true return on investment perception.

Visual engagement and stakeholder communication

To match the visually groundbreaking exhibition, Gorkana invested effort to making the reporting visually engaging (see appendix 3). The research was presented to all major internal and external stakeholders, learnings were discussed as well as their application to future exhibition strategies. Recommendations were made for normative benchmarking against 2014 exhibitions as well as considerations of timing for maximum impact.



AMEC International Communication Effectiveness Awards 2014 Entry Form

Conclusions:

This well scoped research, effectively linked to marketing objectives and business outcomes, clearly demonstrated the significant impact of the press launch and subsequent press campaign on exhibition ticket sales prior to opening. The contribution of PR to the marketing mix and also to sponsor investment was clear.

The research demonstrated PR's role in ensuring the V&A successfully reached new audiences with this exhibition, both in the UK and Internationally. The exhibition exceeded the visitor target by 36%; 27% of the people attending 'David Bowie is' were first time visitors and 24% were from overseas. Market research showed that 18% of all visitors attributed their awareness of the exhibition to content in newspapers and magazines. As a consequence of this successful outreach new media outlets and contacts are now engaged with future V&A projects.

The learnings about timing have been fed into future strategy. For future exhibitions the V&A will consider the impact of holding back news stories and exclusive content until later on in the run to sustain media interest and create new spikes in coverage, as worked particularly well in the case of the Bowie cinema event and 'end of exhibition' activity (see appendix 4).

Gorkana demonstrated that the V&A achieved international reach with content spanning 37 markets. The exhibition has started an international tour, it has already been to Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Canada, Sao Paulo, Brazil and will next travel to Chicago, USA; Paris, France; Groningen, The Netherlands. Further international venues are under discussion and the research is likely to be used as an indicator of future countries for the exhibition to tour to.

In these stretched economic times sponsor investment is not made lightly and the businesses that supported the Museum need to be able to justify this investment. The research enabled this by proving PR successes and achievement of objectives which far exceeded the sponsorship fee. The research was particularly of use to Sennheiser, whose audio equipment is well known to music fans but needed to build on their reach to new audiences that the V&A provided:

"Through this sponsorship we have successfully positioned ourselves as being a key player in the music industry and the awareness and exposure of the brand tie-up was the highest single level of exposure we have had in the UK to date. Not only were we able to communicate with the consumers directly we also had a great opportunity to further strengthen our brand in the industry, which worked out brilliantly for us".

The data can now be used to make business cases when pitching to future sponsorship prospects, demonstrating the high value of PR recognition that V&A sponsorships can achieve. The reporting affirms museum-wide the importance of PR and will be used by the team for internal presentations long in the future.

The longevity of the success of the campaign continues to play out. V&A membership saw a positive rise during the exhibition run with over 10,000 people joining and V&A membership is now at an all-time high. The ability of the PR team to be able to quantify their contribution to this



AMEC International Communication Effectiveness Awards 2014 Entry Form

business success has been groundbreaking for the V&A. The in-house PR team at the V&A commented:

“The results of the report demonstrate the significant impact of the press launch and subsequent press campaign on exhibition ticket sales prior to opening. The full report gives a clear indication of the PR value of the campaign which we can share with sponsors and museum colleagues. Other important findings were that the campaign was successful in its global reach achieving coverage in 37 different countries, frequency of sponsor mentions was high, as was the percentage of reach to all UK adults.”

“The results showing the most prolific journalists was quite surprising but demonstrated that we successfully reached new media outlets, these are now new contacts who we can update about future V&A projects. It was also interesting to note where articles had included a spokesperson comment and front page mentions. This demonstrates the importance of access to key interviewees and strong imagery.”

“The report affirms museum wide the importance of press coverage and will no doubt be used by colleagues for presentations in the future. It will also serve as a helpful indicator of possible countries for the exhibition to tour to.”