



AMEC International Communication Effectiveness Awards 2015 Entry Form – Measurement Agencies

Category: Integrated communication measurement / research

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Client: Stroke Association

Campaign title: Action on Stroke Month

Objective/Brief

Stroke remains one of the biggest health challenges of our time. Stroke kills three times as many women as breast cancer and more men than prostate and testicular cancer combined. Yet it still doesn't get the recognition or funding compared to higher profile causes such as heart disease or cancer. One in ten deaths is due to stroke and it is the single biggest cause of complex disability in the UK. The economic cost is estimated as £9bn a year in the UK including direct NHS costs, other care costs, productivity losses and benefits payments. And yet just £48 a year is spent on medical research in the UK for every stroke patient compared to £241 for every cancer patient.

The Stroke Association is the only major stroke charity in the UK whose mission is to "prevent strokes and achieve life after stroke through providing services, campaigning education and research". Anil Ranchod is the charity's Assistant Director of External Affairs and it was his brainchild to support the charity's vision through Action on Stroke Month – an annual campaign to raise awareness of stroke and to engage and build a 'stroke community' of people whose lives have been devastated by stroke. Many of these include volunteers, health professionals, stroke survivors, their friends and family. The squeeze on public sector budgets has put added pressure on the charity and reinforced how important this network has become.

In 2014, learnings from the measurement of previous campaigns were brought into planning at an early stage to ensure that this year was the most effective yet. A key focus of the campaign was raising awareness of Transient Ischaemic Attack (TIA). These are commonly known as mini-strokes and are often a precursor to a major stroke, but are often ignored. BBC TV presenter Andrew Marr, a high profile stroke survivor, said: "I had two mini-strokes before going on to have a major stroke. I was one of the thousands of people who dismissed the warning signs - simple ignorance." The Stroke Association says that approximately 10,000 recurrent strokes can be prevented every year in the UK if mini-strokes are treated in time.

Strategy

Before the 2014 campaign was launched, Gorkana ran a planning exercise to identify key output (intermediary effect) and outcome (target audience effect) metrics that were aligned to the campaigns objectives. These were based on the valid metrics framework and linked to the key business outcomes of raising awareness, increasing knowledge and understanding amongst key target audiences, driving engagement through social media channels and recruiting new members to the volunteer network. (see *Appendix 1*).

As part of the planning process, the Stroke Association commissioned a survey of 670 people who had experienced a mini-stroke. This showed that almost half had not known the seriousness of their experience, with a third thinking it was "just a funny turn". 1 in 20 had then gone on to have a full stroke. This research was then used to drive the key message: 'thousands of people are dismissing the symptoms of mini-stroke' using the soundbite "not just a funny turn".



Execution/implementation:

Relevant mainstream and social media content was captured and analysed. Human analysts were used to capture the more subtle nuances of key metrics such as favourability and message delivery. A key vehicle to drive coverage was the use of spokespeople and celebrity supporters (including Andrew Marr, Piers Morgan, Jessie J, Tim Vine and Mel Giedroyc) and individuals were tracked against key metrics across both mainstream and social media.

In order to help the Stroke Association target and reach their key audiences, Gorkana used its UKPulse survey data (a representative survey of 10k UK adults in partnership with YouGov). This enabled the charity to target the right media channels to reach each group as part of the planning process before the campaign, and also to measure the effect during and after the implementation. Furthermore, to gauge the effect of raising awareness and improving understanding, Gorkana ran a number of pre and post campaign surveys using a river sampling technique that enabled more rapid and cost-effective results than more traditional panel research.

To drive actions, a key ambition was to mention the Stroke Association website and helpline number in the coverage. These were captured as output metrics but were linked to outcomes by correlating this information with the website and call centre statistics as the campaign evolved.

Effectiveness of Assignment

In terms of output metrics, the mainstream media coverage generated overwhelmingly positive content. Analysis of spokespeople showed that they were indeed a strong driver of positive articles – almost half of strongly favourable pieces featured a spokesperson. Celebrities helped boost the reach of coverage – Piers Morgan and Jessie J both tweeted to 4.2m and 6.5m followers respectively, while Andrew Marr's experience was reported in many high profile outlets including various BBC online and broadcast channels.

The campaign's key messages were successfully conveyed – 76% of articles delivered a message with 'thousands of people are dismissing the symptoms of mini stroke' being the strongest individual message, consistent with the objectives of the campaign.

In terms of calls to action, mentions of the website were significantly more prevalent than the helpline number and this was reflected in the resulting activity for the two channels. This has helped the Stroke Association to plan activities and resourcing for 2015.

A key finding from the measurement of the 2013 campaign was that Black and Minority Ethnic groups (BMEs) were not as successfully reached as other target audiences. This was an important finding, since black people are twice as likely to suffer a stroke as white people. The UKPulse data was used to identify the most appropriate media channels to reach this key audience. The result of this was that the reach to BMEs increased from 67% to 74% (See *Appendix 2*).

The pre and post campaign research showed that 2014 had built on earlier years in terms of the key objectives of raising awareness and improving understanding. Awareness of the Stroke Association increased from 50% to 62% while awareness of mini-strokes increased from 58% to 69%. Understanding of what symptoms to look out for, such as facial and arm weakness, and what actions should be taken also increased significantly (see *Appendix 3*).

Social media engagement was stronger in 2014 compared to earlier years with a 96% increase in mentions compared to 2013. There was a strong correlation between mainstream media, social media and web site traffic with all three peaking on the campaign launch on the 1st May. The overall website volume reached a record number over the course of the month with more than 145k hits. There were 1,742 calls to the helpline number and 1,162 volunteers recruited - an increase from 2013 (See *Appendix 4*).



Each new call and each new volunteer is saving and improving lives, something that does not always come through statistics like this, so to put it into more of a personal context, this is an excerpt from one of many emails received in support of the campaign:

“On Saturday morning I suddenly found that I couldn’t use my right arm. I was a bit alarmed but the feeling went away and we got on with our day. On Sunday I saw your campaign in the New Statesman and realised that what had happened might be serious so, on Monday morning I asked for an appointment to see my GP. Within a couple of hours she’d confirmed that she thought I’d had a mini-stroke and referred me. I had masses of tests at the TIA clinic and was put onto various drugs. So, I’m a bit shaken but so glad that I saw the article and took action.”

Finally, Anil Ranchod, Assistant Director of External Affairs at the Stroke Association has provided some context about how the evaluation of Action on Stroke Month 2014 has affected the charity’s ongoing strategy and future campaign planning:

“The outcome and impact evaluation of Action on Stroke Month is a vital element for the whole organisation, providing valuable insight to the successes of our PR strategy and informing future work, since it was created.

In 2014, we had the most successful Action on Stroke Month ever, driven in the main through integrated planning informed by learning from previous years. A key annual outcome for the Month is reaching more BME communities, who are most at risk of stroke, with key campaign messages which we successfully achieved, up 8% on the previous year. Similarly, our focus on TIA as a major issue also allowed us to increase public awareness and likelihood to seek help.

Statistics outlined in the evaluation reporting for Action on Stroke Month aided explanations of the campaign’s value to both internal and external stakeholders and contributors. The 12% increase in the public’s knowledge of Stroke Association was a key win, as with the increased TIA knowledge mentioned previously. This shows the rest of the business how targeted spending, clear objectives and focused campaigns not only benefit us in terms of offering knowledge but also increases overall charity support and donations. With this in mind, Action on Stroke Month 2015, with its focus on increasing SME awareness of how to support stroke survivors back into the workplace, will incorporate a survey of more than 200 SMEs, thus allowing the specific effect of the Action on Stroke Month 2015 campaign to be assessed.”

