



# Category: B) New Brand **i** newspaper launch

## SUMMARY

Despite the newspaper market's widely reported decline, *The Independent* held an unshakable belief in consumer desire for quality print news. Under the new ownership of the Lebedevs, it took the bold decision to launch into this market a new, paid-for newspaper designed around evolving consumer needs.

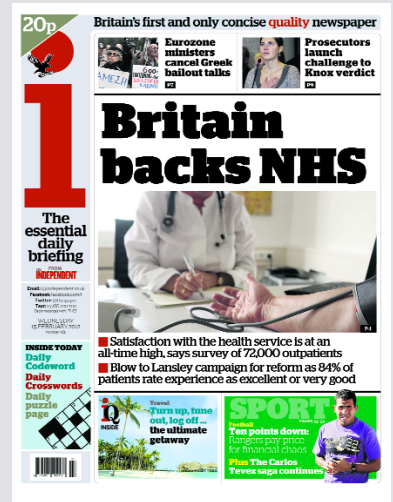
Research had shown that there was a strong desire for quality information in the print newspaper format but that consumers were increasingly time poor.

**i**, the UK's first quality daily newspaper to hit newsstands in almost 25 years, went on sale on Tuesday 26 October 2010. **i** targeted readers and lapsed readers of quality newspapers, combining strong design with high quality content and opinion in a manageable size at the right price. It was designed to grow the market rather than cannibalise it. Targeting a professional ABC1 audience, **i** was an attractive proposition for advertisers.

The marketing mix was key to a successful launch. A clearly defined two phase launch utilised all aspects of communication to maximum effect. The distribution drive was evident as *The Independent* teams visited 12,000 retail outlets. It was also backed by a strategic PR campaign that targeted all key broadcasters to ensure rolling news and feature coverage for the first 48 hours of launch. The second phase of launch activity involved a significant marketing push involving TV, print and digital.

The results are clear to see. By the end of 2011 **i** was the fastest growing daily with a circulation of 170,436 and little cannibalization of *The Independent*. No other national newspaper reported a significant decline, proving that **i** has genuinely grown the newspaper market.

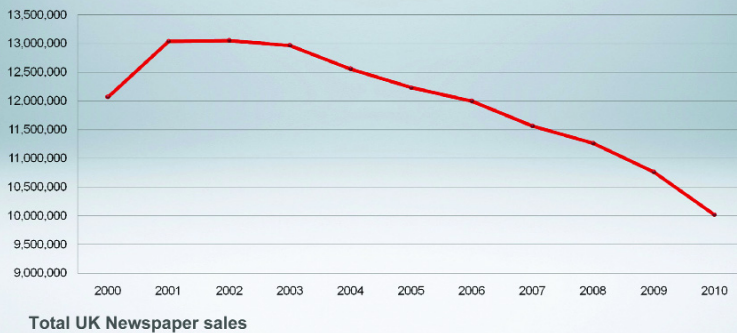
**i**'s launch signals that there is still a real future for print format newspapers, an audience demand for a new concise quality newspaper and the creation of a completely new newspaper category.



## BACKGROUND

The newspaper market has been experiencing a decline both on a national and global scale for over twenty years. In the UK alone, the market slumped 21% between 2007 and 2009 (source: PWC, 2009). Countless online news sources and the dramatic rise of freesheets, such as *The Metro*, have added to what was always an intense competition for readership.

### National scale...



### Global scale



In March 2010, The Lebedevs acquired *The Independent* and *The Independent on Sunday*. A year earlier Alexander Lebedev had undertaken a successful root-and-branch review of the *Evening Standard*, culminating in the title becoming a freesheet after 180 years as a paid-for product. The same team that made the *Evening Standard* the huge success that it is now set about reviewing their options for *The Independent*.

To many, the landscape in 2010 would be the most unreceptive in which to launch a new, paid-for quality title. Regardless of this, *The Independent* held an unshakable belief in a consumer desire for quality print news and demonstrated a unique understanding of what readers want by creating a completely new category in newspapers.

On Tuesday 26 October 2010 **i** became the UK's first national quality daily newspaper to hit newsstands in almost 25 years. Its subsequent success lay in the application of an incredibly focused marketing strategy that found an untapped audience with a desire for an affordable daily quality newspaper and developed a product that fitted it perfectly.



## OBJECTIVES

The launch of a national newspaper is a huge undertaking, and *The Independent* had aggressive targets for its new title. **i** would only be deemed a success if it achieved the following objectives:

- Reach a circulation figure of 150,000
- Avoid cannibalisation of *The Independent* (182,412 at **i** launch (source: ABC Avg.Net UK circulation October 2010)
- Reach a combined *Independent* and **i** average circulation figure of 340,000
- Increase ad revenue growth for the business and achieve majority ad volume in the quality marketplace

## INSIGHT

The UK newspaper market had failed to adapt optimally to changes in news consumption habits and *The Independent* saw a big opportunity. Yet, research by *The Independent* showed that there is still an appetite for a physical, paper product. The problem, however, is that in an age of austerity, £1 to read a daily quality paper felt increasingly wasteful, especially given the fact that the average commute in the UK stands at just 45 minutes.

Despite the continued demand for real news, the combination of cost, multiple alternative news source channels and a lack of time was leading consumers to stop buying papers completely, or to reduce the frequency with which they were buying them. *The Independent* felt that a different type of newspaper was needed. One designed with the 21st century reader in mind.

*The Independent* identified three potential types of readers:

- 1) lapsed readers of qualities
- 2) new newspaper readers
- 3) people 'upgrading' from the Metro

Research showed that these potential audiences viewed the Metro as an ideal size for a commute but the editorial content was too simplistic, slow and celebrity-focussed. Similarly, they viewed the mid-market titles (The Daily Mail and The Express) as being the right size, but too opinionated and biased. Quality dailies were highly regarded for their content, but were too large (pagination) and too expensive. The research led it to summarise that what the market was crying out for was a short, concise quality read at only 20p Monday - Friday.

## THE PRODUCT

*The Independent* took the bold decision to create a brand extension specifically designed to give these potential readers exactly what they wanted. The **i** was created with 5 key principles in mind:

- 1) High quality content
- 2) Aesthetically pleasing design
- 3) Balanced comment/opinion
- 4) Manageable pagination
- 5) Affordable price





With these 5 key principles, *The Independent* had created not only a new newspaper but a completely new newspaper category.

## **LAUNCH**

A two phase launch was planned.

### **Phase One**

This phase ran from 25th October 2010 to 15th January 2011 and began with a highly-focused national outdoor campaign to generate initial awareness coupled with a radio campaign on LBC. *The Independent's* teams also visited 12,000 retail outlets as part of a London focused distribution drive. The launch was supported by press ads and vouchers/sampling in sister paper *The Evening Standard* and 60 tube stations and train stations nationwide.

Phase one was backed by a strategic PR campaign that targeted all key broadcasters to ensure rolling news and feature coverage for the first 48 hours of launch. It was a newsworthy story and picked up quickly because it was the first launch of paid, quality daily newspaper in 25 years.

While this first phase of the campaign was designed to generate initial interest in the product, it was also used as a diagnostic stage to ascertain what readers and newsagents thought of the title and measure exactly who was reading it. This research delivered a clear finding - the launch creative was too cryptic and wasn't telling potential readers and retailers exactly what the new paper was and stood for.



Readers have a very clear understanding of the newspaper brand they read so it was imperative that we made sure that the **i** was understood. People don't just buy 'a newspaper' they specifically buy *The Sun*, *The Daily Mail* or *The Times*. The ATL activity in Phase Two was designed to clearly spell out the benefits of the paper.

### **Phase Two**

Phase two was designed to react to the findings of the research at the end of the initial stage of launch. The response was the creation of a new, bold above-the-line campaign covering TV, print, radio and digital, explaining exactly what the paper was and why the target audience would love it.



The ATL activity for **i** began in January 2011. With new agency partner McCann London on board a significant marketing push took an ad campaign featuring Jemima Khan and Dom Joly onto TV, print and digital.

The campaign broke on 16th January 2011 with a TV spot featuring a series of different people, from commuters and students to celebrities, representing the demographic of the paper. Each delivered a few words of phrases, which, when edited together, formed a single celebratory monologue on why they love the paper

Click on the link below to view the TV ad  
<http://vimeo.com/36705225>



## **ACHIEVEMENTS**

With the **i**, *The Independent* set out to successfully launch the first national quality newspaper in 25 years. It was targeting a circulation of 150,000 but this needed to be achieved without cannibalising *The Independent* newspaper. A combined circulation for the **i** and *The Independent* of 340,000 was set.

On both these measures, **i** has been a huge success. At the end of phase one, the title had a circulation of 60,000 and following the boost in activity during the second phase of the marketing campaign, the circulation rose to 167,944 by the end of February.

Crucially there was little cannibalisation of *The Independent*. As the figures below demonstrate, the title outperformed its rivals in the shrinking daily market for the first 6 months of 2011 (source: ABC Avg. Net UK circulation Jan 2011-June 2011):

*The Independent* - 180,814 (-3.33%)  
The Guardian - 263,458 (-9.29%)  
The Times - 447,059 (-11.76%)  
The Daily Telegraph - 632,617 (-7.97%)

The rate of decline over the 6 months was constant and was not accelerated by the launch of **i**, therefore, verifying that **i** had grown the market rather than stealing share by creating a new newspaper category.

Within three months of the paper's launch a significant result had been achieved with retailers - on launch day the **i** was stocked in 37,000 retail outlets nationally. Three months later the number was 44,000 (equal to The Daily Mail) with 7,000 coming from independent retailers. These results were very much due to heavy engagement and relationship building with retailers.

*The Independent* guaranteed advertisers a combined (**i** and *The Independent*) circulation of 340,000. It delivered 346,410 (source: ABC combined average net circulation Jan 2011-June 2011).



*The Independent* and **i**'s bundles advertising offering gives it greater reach than The Guardian. In paid for sales *The Independents* content is now nearly 3 times greater than last year and has secured a fresh audience of ABC1 quality daily readers for its advertisers.

A continuous revenue growth for **i** was also seen meaning that Independent Print brands now take the majority share of all ad volume in the quality marketplace up from 22% December 2010 to 29% December 2011.

**i** has helped drive the market share of *Independent* Print from 11% December 2010 to 22% December 2011

NRS early estimates reveal 368,000 readers. 2.3 readers per copy and 73% ABC1 readers confirmed the **i** as a quality newspaper with a quality audience.

**i** has also achieved success through daily interaction with readers and now has a facebook following of over 18,000 and a twitter following over 34,000

**i**'s was the fastest growing newspaper for 2011 and continues to grow, December ABC figures were impressive at 170,436 (source: ABC Dec 2011).

By delivering real choice to the consumer *The Independent* had successfully delivered the first quality newspaper in a quarter of a century.

