




WHEN THE **FUN** STOPS ™

Category: **Customer Insight**

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SUMMARY

How do you talk to people who don't want to hear from you?

At precisely the moment when they least want your message?

In a way that will satisfy several CEOs of rival businesses, MPs and a cynical public?

When your problem is complex, but you've got just 20% of a poster to work with?

This is the story of the first ever industry-wide responsible gambling campaign in the UK.

A campaign John Humphrys on Radio 4 had decried pre-launch as “window dressing”, but which politicians now laud as “fantastic stuff”.¹

At the heart of its development was a ‘gambling panel’ of twenty-something men. They taught us to defy the academic convention of measuring problem gambling via lists of behaviours, but instead, to focus on gamblers’ emotions.

That directly led to a message that is simple, concise, flexible and enduring.

This campaign has been adopted by a growing number of gambling companies, used as a case study for similar campaigns across Europe and, most importantly, has helped over five million UK adults approach gambling more responsibly.²

The five words at its core have since been recited by 3.8 million people at some point in the last 3 years.³

This is the story of how customer insight led to:
‘When The Fun Stops, Stop’.

1: ‘Window-dressing’ was the widely quoted summary of the Campaign for Fairer Gambling. Recited by John Humphrys on Radio 4’s Today Programme, September 2014. “Fantastic stuff” was the verdict of Nick King, then Special Adviser to Sajid Javid – the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport.and, most importantly, has helped over five million UK adults approach gambling more responsibly.

2: Source: Bilendi quantitative tracking, September 2017. Stats extrapolated from sample of: 2,001 nationally representative adults.

3: Ibid.

THE CONTEXT

The gambling industry in the UK has grown rapidly over recent years. It is now worth £13.8bn annually, up more than 70% since 2009. At the same time, media spend on gambling advertising has grown to approximately £180m per year.¹

With this has come increased media attention. In recent years, there have been many articles examining the gambling industry's visibility on the high street, its rising presence in the ad breaks and stories about the impact of gambling addiction.

The gambling industry has itself expressed concern about problem gambling. Leading figures have acknowledged the need to find a “balance between an individual’s freedom to bet and the responsibility to protect (people) as far as possible.”²

By 2013, leading politicians of the time had also started raising the topic. Labour leader Ed Miliband complained that gaming machines in betting shops were “spreading like an epidemic”. A few months later, Prime Minister David Cameron said he “absolutely shares the concerns” of the opposition leader, arguing there were “problems in the betting and gambling industry”.³

1: 'UK Gambling Industry Statistics', Gambling Commission, January 2018. Media figures from Nielsen / addynamix.

2: Carl Leaver, CEO Gala Coral, speaking on The Today Programme, BBC Radio 4, September 2014

3: The Guardian, January 2014

The collage features several news snippets:

- NEWSBEAT** header with navigation: Home | Entertainment | Music | Health | Technology | Politics | Contact Us
- Health** section header.
- Article: **Number of young people with gambling problems increases** by Greg Dawson and Jimmy Blake.
- EXPRESS** article: **Is this struggling town gambling away its future?** (Rochdale) by Stewart Whittingham, published Sat, January 26, 2013.
- MailOnline** article: **Casino Britain: The depraved staggering £340 for EVERY child is pumped into gambling in a year**.
- BBC News** article: **Gambling addict who lost everything rebuilds his life** by Libby Sutcliffe.
- The Observer** article: **"I turned £2,000 into £82,000 blew the lot in 10 minutes"** by Ranjit Bolt, Sunday 23 September 2012.
- The Observer** article: **Gambling addict blew £200,000 in ten years after becoming hooked on fixed odds betting terminals** by Andy Richardson, Sep 30, 2014 12:08.

Other visible elements include a roulette table, a man in a blue shirt holding a book, and a man's face in a close-up shot.

THE LAUNCH OF THE SENET GROUP

Against this backdrop, four of the UK's biggest bookmakers – William Hill, Paddy Power, Ladbrokes and Coral – launched The Senet Group in September 2014. Independent, but funded by the industry, the organisation's purpose is to promote responsible gambling standards.

As part of this, each member company promised to promote responsible gambling message(s) - including within every piece of their gambling advertising.



THE CHALLENGE

**How do you educate people to gamble responsibly?
Several factors made this a challenge.**

1. The campaign needed to work in very concise spaces: e.g. the bottom 20% of a betting shop window poster (see media examples, on following pages). Not just small spaces, but ones that could antagonise the audience. (Do you really want to be cautioned about your gambling, in exactly the place where you've gone to gamble?)
2. The campaign needed to satisfy stakeholders across the spectrum: from CEOs of bookmakers to leaders of gambling charities. These were all people with well-informed and strongly-felt opinions - as well as significant personal influence. We needed each of them onside.
3. There was already a backlash growing in some quarters about the campaign (see right). Put frankly: some people were waiting for the campaign to fail - and would be looking from the outset for signs of under-performance.



Cartoon from the Irish Independent to accompany the launch of the Senet Group campaign

Source: Irish Independent, January 2015

THE BEGINNING DESK RESEARCH

The team began by absorbing various gambling-related academic research, as well as broader studies of addictive behaviour. While enlightening, this work exposed that ‘problem gambling’ is highly complex: a variety of different triggers, existing in a range of different contexts, it’s a notoriously hard problem to define.

Academic definitions themselves are inconsistent and often convoluted - using scores to rank long lists of behaviours.¹

There was no easy off the shelf definition.

Or off the shelf answer.

In part, the difficulty stemmed from the audience. At risk gambling / problem gambling is concentrated amongst young men – a group not renowned for their openness, whilst highly renowned for responding negatively to attempts at control.

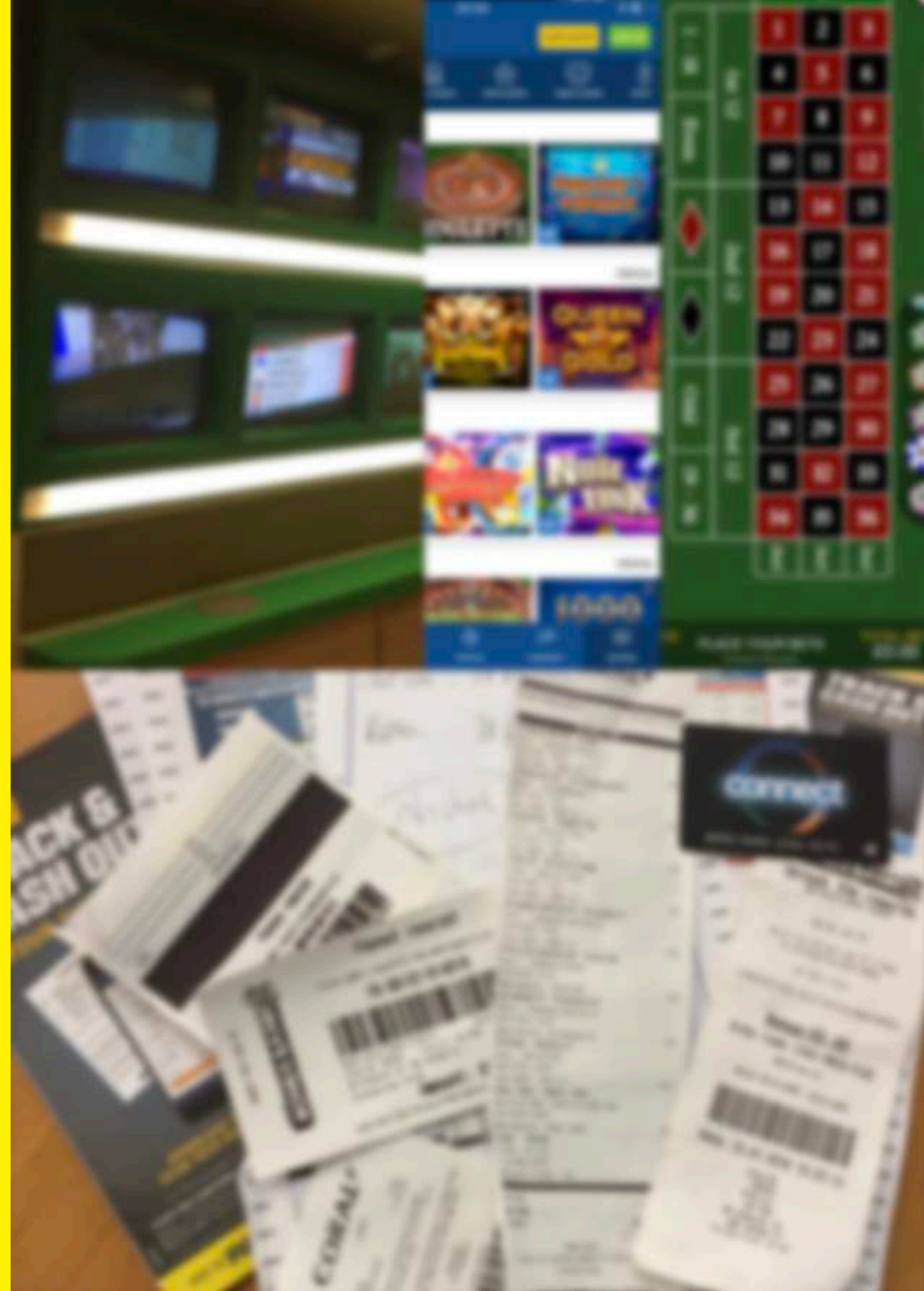
But if we could get these men to open up, what could they tell us?

1: For example, the Problem Gambling Severity Index – used to measure the number of problem gamblers in previous editions of the British Gambling Prevalance Survey – involves asking 9 questions on a sliding score, and ranking respondents on a scale of 0-27. Source: ‘Gambling Behaviour in England and Scotland’, NatCen Social Research, 2012.

THE 'GAMBLING PANEL'

We recruited a 'gambling panel' of 20-something, male, friendship pairs. We joined these men in their spare time, had relaxed conversations about gambling and beyond ("I'm not normally chatty about this stuff") and asked them to keep gambling diaries via WhatsApp.¹ We consequently learned where and how gambling featured in their day-to-day lives. In terms of the rigour of research, this was all about getting 'under the skin' of the audience.

In the process, we learned how difficult it is to identify problem gambling simply by behaviour. Gambling preferences are not uniform: different people bet different amounts, on different sports, at different times, in different ways. Signs of problem behaviour - such as gambling increasing amounts or chasing losses - are 'fluid'. As academic research has shown, at-risk gamblers veer in-and-out of problem behaviours at the start. And one person's 'behavioural symptoms' of problem gambling are different to another.



1: Quote from qual research with gambling panel, October 2014. Note these men were not encouraged to gamble, but recruited beforehand as people who already liked to do so.

IT'S ALL ABOUT EMOTION

But crucially, what did become apparent were the emotions attached to gambling - especially when it goes too far. From being a bit of fun and enjoyment at the start, we heard stories of men getting overly 'wrapped up in it' - be it via the bravado of winning or the frustrations of losing - leading to feelings of anxiety and even guilt at knowingly betting too much.

We learned that the exact moment of placing a bet comes with 'emotional tells': people getting cocky and placing that bet "showing too much swagger"; people chasing losses with "frustration in their faces and fists", while those getting in too deep "start hesitating, looking nervous, running a hand over their cheeks".

Emotional indicators of entering problem territory - gambling panel quotes

"You're cool to start. But if you lose - it's like someone's got one over you - then you bet too much in anger".

"You feel annoyed when you go too far betting - and you get that guilty feeling in the pit of your stomach."

"If you're winning, it's like 'your on it'. People notice - you start bragging. You get cocky!"

"Afterwards it's like: 'damn that just cost me as much as this coat. And you feel angry with yourself. It really gets to you."

"You sort of know when you're going too far, and you can see it in mates, too. They start hesitating, looking nervous, running a hand over their cheeks"

THE KEY INSIGHT

These emotional tells were evident - and self-reported - by gamblers of all varieties: sports/casino/online/offline/solus/social and so forth. All emotional signals that the fun has gone, and a gambler is entering problem territory.

This led to our key insight (see right).

Key insight:

The best way to think about problem gambling is not in terms of behaviour. It's in terms of emotion.

Specifically:

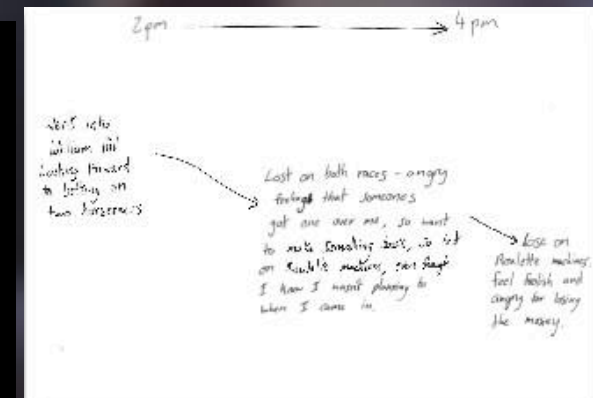
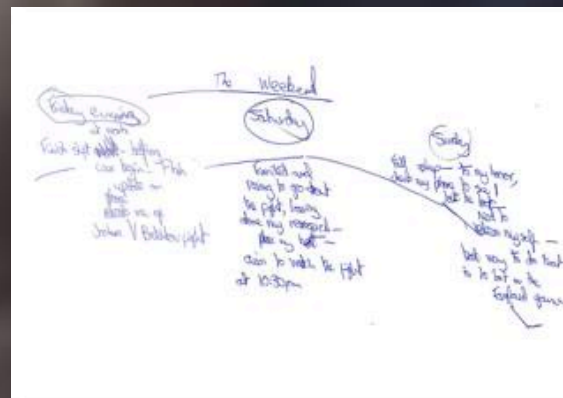
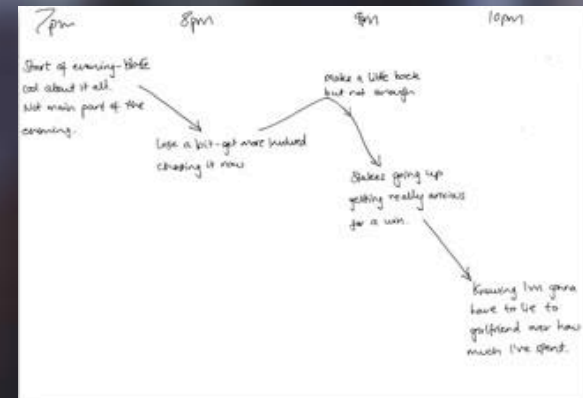
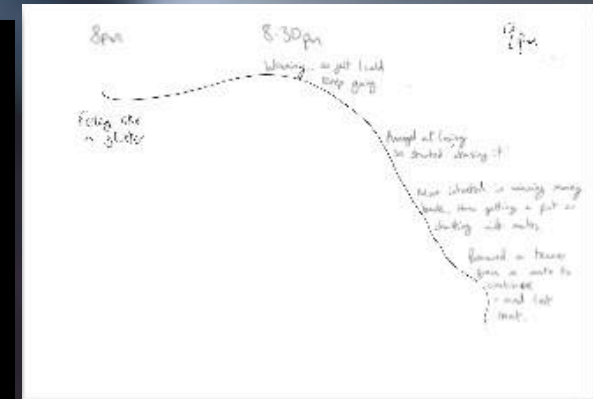
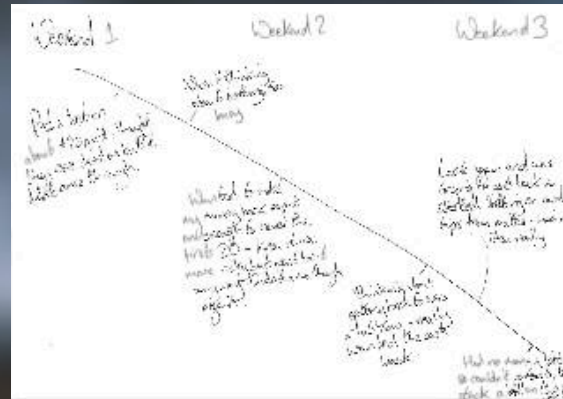
The universal sign of entering problem territory is negative emotions at the moment of placing a bet.

STORIES OF SLIDES

It's one thing to discover an insight. It's as important how you communicate it to all relevant stakeholders. In this case: CEOs of bookmakers, MPs and other officials guiding public policy, leaders of gambling charities, journalists and other influencers in broader culture...

To achieve this, the research panel were asked to put their gambling experiences on paper, specifically plotting the emotional journey of a moment when things have gone too far. This reduced the emphasis on logical rationale, instead placing the focus on 'stories of slides'. It made the insight human, relatable, universal and - crucially in a project like this - visual in a way people could immediately grasp. These drawings (right) have been shared in a whole host of presentations to different groups.

In these slides are tales of "annoyance at losing so needing to redeem myself", of feeling the "anxious need for a win" and even "knowing I'm gonna have to lie to my girlfriend over how much I've spent". In short: stories of losing the enjoyment or fun.



CREATIVE APPLICATION OF THE INSIGHT

Having identified the insight, we then wanted to see where it led creatively.

Specifically, our focus was on getting to a universal responsible gambling message that was simple, concise, flexible in different formats and could endure.

So in a spirit of simplicity and clarity, we encapsulated the gambling panel's drawings in a single visual for our creative agency team at The Corner - an emotional slide from fun gambling to problem gambling, with 'emotional metrics' at each stage (see right).

The emotional slide from fun gambling to problem gambling

Fun gambling

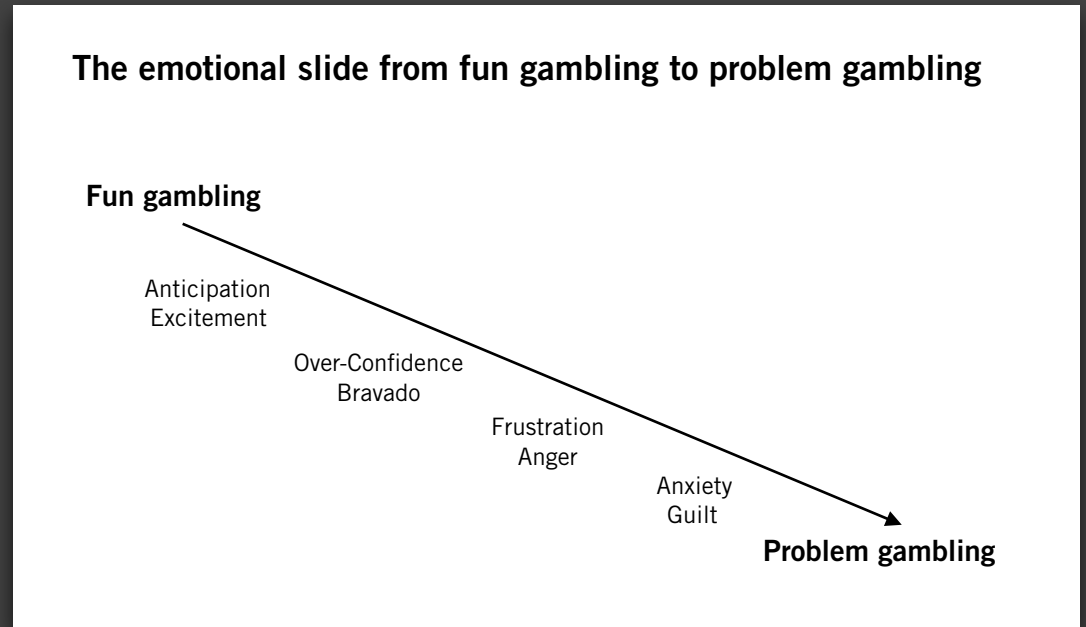
Anticipation
Excitement

Over-Confidence
Bravado

Frustration
Anger

Anxiety
Guilt

Problem gambling



THE CAMPAIGN LINE

From this briefing, the advertising creatives immediately got it:



'When The Fun Stops, Stop' has many merits:

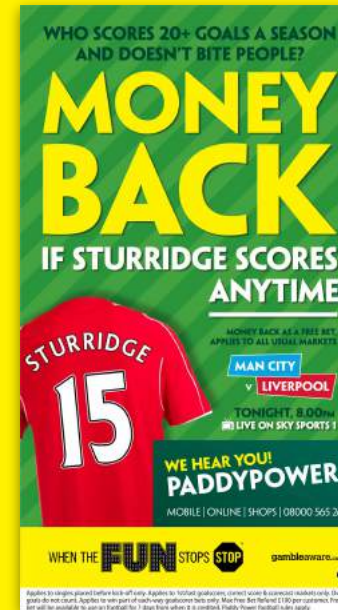
- It captures the key emotional measure of gambling without feeling 'fluffy' or academic.
- It's everyday language that everyone can understand.
- It encourages self-reflection, flattering the reader's own judgement, rather than lecturing.
- It acknowledges that gambling is meant to be fun - so can sit alongside a gambling advert and not be hypocritical - yet provides a final word of caution on any gambling comms.
- It's short, and works successfully across the range of gambling touch-points.

Why yellow? It contrasts with the main brand colours of the leading gambling companies; it says caution (rather than red's danger) and, as shown in the upcoming examples, it provides significant stand out.

CAMPAIGN ACTIVITY

'When The Fun Stops, Stop' now appears in every piece of advertising from Britain's leading bookmakers.

It also appears prominently in apps, on gambling company websites and in social channels. While in betting stores, it's on everything from leaflets, to game machine screens, to coffee cups. Plus from next football season, it will also be on Championship referees' sleeves.



See Ladbrokes rules apply. Ladbrokes reserves the right to restrict bonuses to individual customers at its discretion. PLEASE BET RESPONSIBLY. gambleaware.co.uk. Read help! Call the National Helpline free on 0800 800 123

STANDALONE CREATIVE

There has also been some standalone 'When The Fun Stops, Stop' creative work, including TV, press, poster and social posts.

In TV - a format allowing for more time and entertainment - a bet being placed in the wrong mood is equated with a 'Bad Betty' - consequently leading everyone around the gambler to sing Ram Jam's 1970s hit "Black Betty" with a small tweak to the lyrics: "Whoa, Bad Betty!" The closing voiceover warns: "If you're betting when you're angry or frustrated, it's a 'Bad Betty'. So pause for a moment and think again. When the fun stops, stop". (Creative agency: The Corner).

In a SkyBet-specific execution, Jeff Stelling addresses the camera: "You know that small slogan at the end of every betting ad? Let's put it at the beginning. And let's make it huge. SkyBet believe that nothing should get in the way of your enjoyment of sport... betting should only enhance the excitement. So enjoy every bulls-eye pinging, bunker-chipping, steeple-chasing magic moment sport has to offer. And remember: When the fun stops, stop." (Creative agency: Who Wot Why).

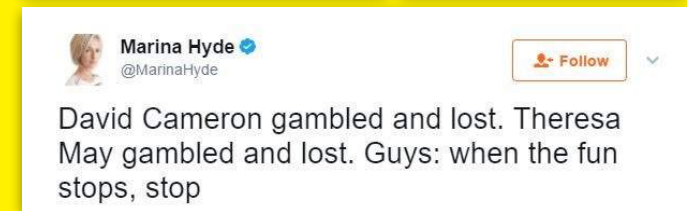
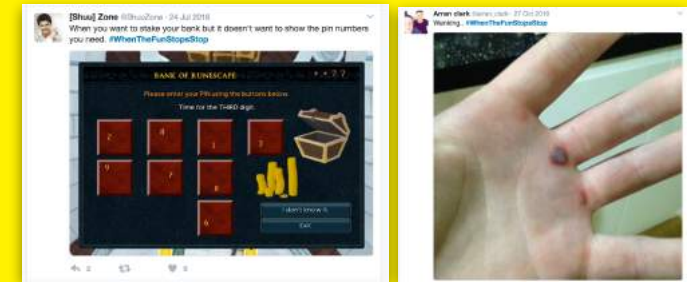


THE RESULT: A LINE IN POPULAR CULTURE

'When The Fun Stops, Stop' was launched in January 2015. Since then, the gambling industry - and the UK's political landscape - has changed considerably. Three of the four CEOs who originally backed the campaign have been replaced. Meanwhile, many of the key figures in government and opposition have also changed. Specifically, the government minister responsible for gambling has changed three times. **Yet the campaign has continued exactly the same.**

This ongoing commitment - from both private and public figures - is testament to the enduring relevance of the insight - and the campaign's results.

According to tracking, **3.8 million people have recited the campaign line at some point in the last 3 years.**¹ Some people have taken it outside of gambling, showing how the phrase has permeated popular culture. Indeed 'When The Fun Stops, Stop' has been used to caution against too much of anything: whether it's drunken chats about religion, politicians unwisely calling nationwide votes or, er, too much self-pleasure (see examples, right).



1: Source: Bilendi quantitative tracking, September 2017. Stats extrapolated from sample of 2,001 nationally representative adults.

A CAMPAIGN OF REAL IMPACT

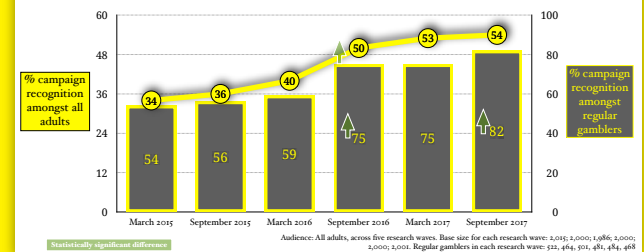
But this campaign has not just been about a slogan:

- **19%** of those who recognise the campaign say they have since felt prompted to “warn other people about their gambling, if only jokingly”.
- **33%** of regular gamblers who recall the campaign say it has prompted them to “Think about my own gambling behaviour”
- **5.4m** people agree the campaign has “helped me approach gambling more responsibly”.

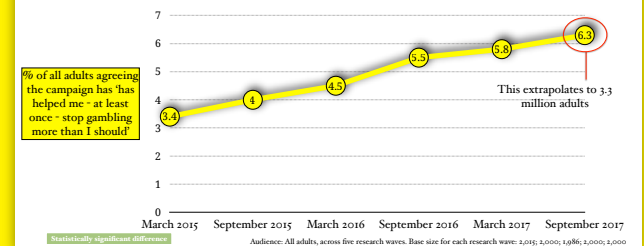
When looked at over time, it’s evident that results started well, and have got consistently stronger - as demonstrated across a wide range of comms measures / tracking statements (some examples, right).¹

The campaign - and by proxy the insight - have continued to ‘wear in’ effectively.

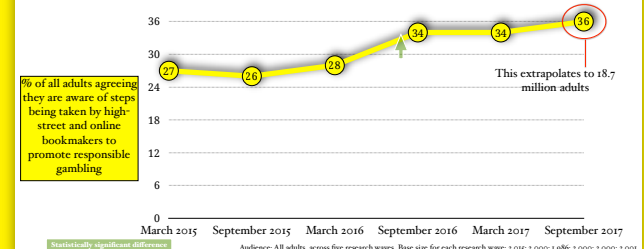
Campaign recognition continues to grow amongst both regular gamblers and the total population



There has been a consistent increase in the number of people who have stopped gambling more than they believe they should



Awareness of any steps being taken by gambling companies to promote responsible gambling has also increased



1: All stats from Bilendi quantitative tracking. Headline figures taken from most recent research wave in September 2017. Historic trend figures taken from six historic research waves, which began in March 2015. Sample sizes in the six research waves so far: 2,015; 2,000; 1,986; 2,000; 2,000; 2,001

A PROJECT WITH MOMENTUM

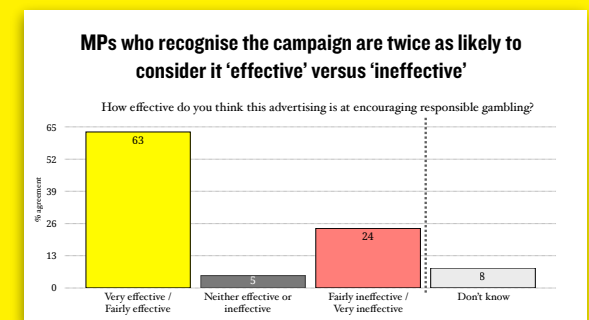
This sense of growing momentum is evident beyond the tracking. There are now seven gambling brands using 'When The Fun Stops, Stop' - up from four brands at launch - with more open access to this comms now planned to go industry-wide. All evidence that a new body, perhaps seen initially as a bit of an experiment, has flourished.

In turn, Westminster has been complimentary. Nick King, then Special Adviser to Sajid Javid – the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport - said he was “really impressed” and that the campaign was “fantastic stuff”. Research amongst MPs shows that those who recognise the campaign are twice as likely to consider it ‘effective’ versus ‘ineffective’. (This includes Labour

MPs, not historically supportive of industry self-regulation).¹

Further afield, the French Online Gaming Regulatory Authority have taken inspiration from the campaign. While closer to home, non-Senet Group gambling companies – including BetFred – have started running ads in their windows and outside their stores that look flatteringly similar (see right).

Perhaps the final word belongs to ‘Betting Business’ magazine, an industry publication which captures the early cynicism, and our success in defying it. “The most surprising thing... about the UK’s first socially responsible gambling campaign” it mused, “is that it is actually quite good.”²



1: 'Source: Ipsos MORI MPs survey, June-July 2016
2: 'Not so bad betty', Betting Business, February 2015

CONCLUSION: THE POWER OF AN INSIGHT

This case study is a reminder of the power a genuine insight can wield: shaping a campaign with a range of powerful stakeholders; steering an approach that satisfied a broad range of commentators; helping foster comms language that enters popular culture, and in turn prompting positive behaviour from millions.

It all began by truly getting under the skin of the issue, via the audience.

Ultimately showing that with even the most sensitive topics, on the biggest of stages, with the largest of scales: an insight can exert dramatic influence.



Coverage of The Senet Group campaign, Scotland ITV Central

Source: Scotland ITV Central, January 2015