

Marketing on a shoestring – JWT London and Séraphine

Summary:

This is a story born not of a 'what if' but rather a 'when...' conversation between the founder and chief designer of Séraphine, Cécile Reinaud and creative agency, JWT London. Sparked by the unprecedented global press coverage the royal marriage had received, the thought was simple; how could Séraphine, a maternity wear brand, plan for the opportunity that an inevitable royal pregnancy would provide?

The strategy was clear: Graft the smallest of brands to the biggest of events. Séraphine needed to own the royal maternity conversation at a time of unprecedented international interest.

JWT London & Séraphine focused on a unique media opportunity centred around the prime retail location of the Séraphine store near Kensington Palace, and the warm summer anticipated for the birth. With an elegant creative idea that tapped into the public's fascination with the birth, a campaign designed to drive global PR interest, and meticulous planning in place, we waited for the joyous moment.

With global PR coverage and a huge increase in annual turnover the campaign was a resounding success, delivering against all of its objectives. With a minimum spend Séraphine's future fortunes have been transformed, both here and abroad.

Background:

In April 2011, before Prince George was even a twinkle in his father's, or mother's eye, the world witnessed the marriage of Kate and Wills. The wedding of the younger generation of royals epitomised the public's modern attitude towards the Royal Family. From the Times & The Guardian, to the twitterati and the blogsphere – the coverage and the interest in the royals skyrocketed. It was a union that heralded a new relationship between the British public and the monarchy, and a union that would go on to provide Britain with its next heir.

This is a story born not of a 'what if' but rather a 'when...' conversation between the founder and chief designer of Séraphine, Cécile Reinaud and creative agency, JWT London. Sparked by the unprecedented global press coverage the marriage had received, the thought was simple; how could Séraphine, a maternity wear brand, plan for the opportunity that an inevitable royal pregnancy would provide?

Considering the level of hysteria around the wedding, and the newfound British love for the Monarchy, it seemed guaranteed that a future pregnancy would generate as much, if not more excitement. This conversation soon evolved into how JWT London and Séraphine could kickstart the brand with its first ever campaign and maximise PR exposure at the time of a royal pregnancy.

The strategy was simple: Graft the smallest of brands to the biggest of events. Séraphine needed to own the royal maternity conversation at a time of unprecedented interest. As the planning between JWT London and Séraphine progressed, it became clear that the success of the campaign would be born of hitting three clear objectives:

- Commercial success at a minimum cost
- Fuel for PR before and after the birth event
- Enhancement of interest in the brand from a commercial / investor community perspective

So how did we manage to cut through the mass media hysteria and own the royal baby conversation? With 4 simple steps:

1. Audience Planning:

Whilst premium in design and manufacture, Séraphine's range is not purse-busting in price. Séraphine's audience are discerning with many high profile celebrities like Halle Berry, Angelia Jolie and Jessica Alba wearing the brand, but its medium price range appeals to the average pregnant women looking for stylish maternity clothes.

With concessions in John Lewis nationwide and four chic boutiques in London, Séraphine skilfully appeals to a relatively broad audience. But it was a small brand; high-reach broadcast media campaigns were never going to be an option.

2. Media Planning:

With a total marketing budget of less than £10,000, the unorthodox decision was made to start with most cost effective medium and work back from there. Guerrilla, social and free media for the

obvious starting places. However, we soon came to the conclusion that highly targeted, PR-able, paid for media could be used to better effect. With just one chance to maximise their brand around this world event, JWT identified the need to leverage the location of one of the flagship Séraphine boutiques in High St Kensington. The store was just a stone's throw from Kensington Palace, home of William and Kate, and with high retail shopper footfall, it presented the perfect core to the planning of the campaign.

Based on the prime retail location of the Kensington store and the warm summer anticipated (guessed) for the birth, bus routes would provide an unexpectedly enticing opportunity. After some tough negotiation, we obtained exceptionally good options on bus sides on carefully selected routes that would carry the Séraphine message in these premium locations. The no.25 bus route in particular was chosen based on its journey through top London retail locations and its proximity to the Séraphine store. It was imperative that not only did we get as many eyes on the campaign as possible (it ran on 6 buses) but that the relevance of the creative was amplified by being seen in the vicinity of the store (and the Royal Palace).

Ultimately, we timed the campaign perfectly; it launched on 1st July 2012 and ran until 2 weeks after the birth (5th August).

3. Patience:

We developed our creative idea for the optioned media. Then we waited. Naturally, we harboured the secret hope that the Duchess would become pregnant and might even shop with Séraphine (being walking distance from her front door).

By February 2013 his secret hope had become a reality and, as anticipated, Séraphine received orders from The Duchess of Cambridge for confidential deliveries at Kensington Palace. Kate had clearly become a fan of the brand as she ordered five different varieties of dresses from Séraphine.

When the media attention reached its peak in the last two weeks prior to the birth, as journalists from the world gave excited day after day waiting for the delivery, as the bets on the future name of the heir rolled in - we launched the campaign.

4. The Creative Idea & delivery:

The creative idea was simple and elegant for the bus-sides: Capitalise on the budding question of the sex of the baby. Séraphine would post the question "Is it a boy or is it a girl?" Boy messaging would sit on one side of the bus, Girl messaging on the other. We would time our media to fill the two weeks before the birth, and the week after. In order to be that flexible and topical, the bus media had to be booked at the very last minute – a delicate waiting game.

The proximity of the palace along with the existing Séraphine branding provided perfectly regal purple cues. The campaign was not purely advertising, it extended upstream to the product lines itself. Séraphine also launched the "Regal Maternity Wear" line.

The initial message mirrored the pre-occupied thoughts of the nation; would the future heir to the throne be a boy or a girl? An online competition mechanic was built and Séraphine's website was

given-over to the new work and themed promotions around the Boy/Girl idea. After launching our campaign, this completion went on to receive more than 4,000 entries.

With perfect timing, just before the 2 week campaign ended and the press speculation reached its zenith, the prince was born. Overnight, the bus-artwork was taken down and replaced with pre-printed new messaging. And thus, our pre-planned ability to change the message meant an updated congratulatory message that also played with the regal salutation of M'am with the headline; 'Congratulations M'um'. Meanwhile, the world's press conveniently fanned the flames of our messaging with 24/7 news coverage of the couple and the new heir.

The unexpected cherry on the cake emerged from the hospital the day after the birth. Kate wore a Séraphine dress as the world got the first glimpse of Prince George on their way home.

Delivery against Objectives:

i) Deliver commercial success at a minimum cost

With a total budget of just £10,000 JWT London and Séraphine went on to achieve outstanding results:

July 2013 compared to June 2013 UK Site Traffic (the period of the campaign):

Total Traffic on site up 114%

Organic Traffic up 120% (driven by brand queries)

Direct Traffic up 134%

Visits via Social up 313%

Online Sales +52% - 5 individual clothing lines sold out in one month period.

Total Annual Sales 2013 up 70% (vs. 2012) to £8.5m

ii) Fuel PR before and after the birth event:

We knew from the outset that the opportunity for the brand mainly lay with PR; it was the perfect opportunity for the perfect brand. With many brands considering themselves as Goliath and looking to muscle in on the Royal Birth, we knew we had to fight clever in the busy marketplace – and play David. To win our fair share of the coverage; our simple and elegant out of home campaign had to truly stand-out. Not only that, it had to convert the oxygen received from PR into crucial sales. JWT London knew that with a small budget, the campaign that inspired PR to maintain its interest in Séraphine, and capitalised on the massive potential media attention would be the winning campaign.

Inherent to our choice of media and creative idea was the need to provide maximum impact for all PR activity. Working in concert with BPR, the advertising and PR connections were planned rigorously.

Phase One: Launch Advertising / teaser / online promotions (See Fig A, B)



Figure A – Launch Advertising



IS IT A GIRL? IS IT A BOY?



*The question on everyone's lips
and some London buses, is it a boy? Is it a girl?*

Guess the royal baby name to win an exclusive £1000 maternity wardrobe. Think you know? Take a venture and guess the name. To participate, simply enter your guess, your name and your email address in the below fields for the chance to win. Entries close on the day of the royal birth and the winner will be picked at random amongst the correct answers.

Good luck!



GUESS THE NAME

Your Name *

Your Email Address *

Your Guess *

Submit



Guess the royal
BABY NAME
at www.seraphine.com

Terms & conditions apply

Figure B – Is it a girl? Is it a boy? Online promotion.

Phase Two: PR frenzy with picture of Kate in Séraphine blossom dress the day after she left the hospital on the 24th of July (See Figure C)



© Justin Goff:GoffPhotos.com

Special moment: Prince William and Kate waved and smiled broadly as they carried their son out of hospital, but they are yet to decide on a name

Figure C – Daily Mail, 24 July 2013 – Kate in Séraphine blossom dress the day after she left the hospital

Phase Three: Advertising Congratulations (See Figure D)



Figure D – Advertising Congratulations (<http://www.facebook.com/SeraphineMaternity>)

Phase Four: Further PR and Hello coverage / first official photos (See Figure E, F & Appendix 1)

Figure E - First official photos – Hello Magazine



HELLO!

The baton passed back and forth between PR and Advertising, to good effect and the longevity of the campaign was maximised.

We succeeded in placing Séraphine at the heart of all conversation around maternity and fashion. Not only was the campaign credited as the very first around the impending birth¹ but it was also the most relevant. JWT London crafted a tone of voice that was just right for the occasion and the brand, not offending the Palace or courting controversy, but one that would generate love for the brand as a maternity company.

Séraphine was the first brand to publicly congratulate the new parents. What's more, the very first official photo of baby George with his parents was released with Kate wearing none other than a Séraphine dress.

iii) Enhance interest in the brand from a commercial / investor community perspective

A quiet and to date, unspoken objective was for the campaign to help generate investor interest in the company. Since the campaign and associated PR, Séraphine has been courted by no fewer than two European and three North American investors. Negotiations are ongoing but this, the third of our pre activity objectives, has been successfully met.

¹Advertising Age, 8th July 2013

In Summary:

The campaign was a triumph of foresight, patience and the willingness to gamble. It was simple, leveraged all the assets at this small brand's disposal and fuelled a PR masterpiece. With meticulous planning for not only the campaign launch, but its final flourish – we created our own lucky breaks. We bet heavily on our timing and ability to be responsive, and as the saying goes, “Fortune favours the brave.” Yes, there was some luck in the timing and the Duchess’ use of the clothing during maternity, but these were chances that were “bet on”.

With a ‘when’ rather than ‘if’ mentality, we were able to ensure that both JWT and Séraphine were poised to communicate when it mattered. One could argue that this was an informed, well planned gamble, with the PR stakes higher than ever, this ad campaign had to be perfect. With a minimum of expenditure, Séraphine’s revenues and future fortunes have undoubtedly been transformed here and abroad. France’s Le Figaro summed it up perfectly in their article 29/07/13:

“The brand has also managed to ride the wave of excitement related to pregnancy of Kate Middleton to increase its visibility. “Is it a girl? Is it a boy? ”was the question the brand asked on London buses throughout the first half of July..... The entrepreneur who started her shop in London a decade ago expects a turnover of £ 8 million (approximately EUR 10 million) this year, versus £ 6 million the previous year.”

We couldn’t have put it better ourselves. Merci, Le Figaro!

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MARQUEZ - Sévigné

"Is it a girl ? Is it a boy ?" Séraphine s'affiche sur les bus londoniens

Par Karine Hérold le 11/07/2013

La marque française de vêtements de grossesse Séraphine surfe sur la vague du bébé royal avec humour et opportunisme. Elle s'affiche sur les bus londoniens qui reflètent Kensington Palace...

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La marque Séraphine lance une campagne de bus communicant sur la question que tous les britanniques se posent "Is it a girl or a boy?"

La naissance de leur héritier se fera sans une des jamais depuis ces mois et la question du moment, "Is it a girl or a boy?" anime les britanniques et les lecteurs de la presse people du monde entier. Les bus sont tapés de la violet couleur que Séraphine partage avec la monarchie britannique. On pourra ainsi apercevoir ces effluves mères et le de Kensington à Kensington palace jus qu'au 15 juin.

La marque française a reçu plusieurs appels de Kensington Palace... C'est à Royal la créatrice styliste de la marque profite de cette occasion. **Marketing mondiale pour faire passer d'elle** Séraphine, c'est possible à l'agence de publicité J Walter Thorton pour concevoir cette campagne d'affichage et donner l'opportunité à toutes les futures mères de porter une robe-voile de maternité digne d'une princesse...

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03.07.13 **UK: Séraphine surfe sur la vague du bébé royal**

Le Echos lance la 1ère Web App média en France et une nouvelle app mobile

La marque de vêtements de grossesse Séraphine lance une campagne de bus posant la question qui trouble les esprits de tous les britanniques : « Is it a girl? Is it a boy? ». Depuis deux semaines, la marque des futures mamans publie sur les bus londoniens des affiches de couleurs qui Séraphine partage avec la monarchie britannique. Les affiches mauves et roses issues des cartons de Walter Thomson et procèdent aussi aux futures mamans de gagner une garde-robe de maternité digne d'une princesse.

Carole Swastart

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Fille ou garçon: la marque pour futures mamans Séraphine orne les bus londoniens

Début-Mars, quelques semaines de la naissance de Royal Baby, une question est sur toutes les lèvres: fille ou garçon? Et c'est avec humour que Séraphine, la marque d'habillement pour femmes enceintes créée il y a dix ans à Londres par la Française Cécile Seraphin, met sur le tapis son prochain challenge: celui du futur bébé du trône britannique. Avec une campagne de communication qui, jusqu'au 31 juillet, habille les célèbres bus londoniens. Dirigée par l'agence de publicité J Walter Thomson, cette campagne d'affichage "Is it a girl? Is it a boy?" donne également l'opportunité aux futures mamans de gagner une garde-robe de maternité.

Le Echos lance la 1ère Web App média en France et une nouvelle app mobile

Le Echos lance la 1ère Web App média en France et une nouvelle app mobile. Une application mobile qui permet de consulter les actualités de la marque sur son smartphone. Une application qui est disponible sur l'App Store et Google Play.