



MARKETING EXCELLENCE 2

Harlequins

Big brand thinking on a shoestring



MARKETING
SOCIETY

AWARDS FOR
EXCELLENCE

in association with
Marketing

About The Marketing Society



INSPIRING BOLDER MARKETING LEADERSHIP

The Marketing Society is a not-for-profit organisation owned by its members, with over 2500 senior marketers. Over the past 50 years it has emerged as one of the most influential drivers of marketing in the UK business community.

The Society challenges its members to think differently and to be bolder marketing leaders by supporting the development of leading-edge thinking, and promoting the evidence of effective marketing. The Society does this through the Marketing Society Awards for Excellence; its publications Market Leader, Our Week and rich online Knowledge Zone; a national programme of world-class events; innovative professional development, such as the annual Marketing Leaders Programme; and extensive on-and-offline networking opportunities.

www.marketing-society.org.uk

Foreword

By Roisin Donnelly,
President of The Marketing Society

What is marketing excellence?



Roisin Donnelly
President of
The Marketing Society
Corporate Marketing
Director and Head of
Marketing at Procter &
Gamble UK and Ireland

Marketing excellence can drive breakthrough business results for the short and long term. Marketing excellence requires great strategic thinking, great creative thinking and perfect execution.

But how do we assess *marketing* excellence? First we choose brilliant industry judges who are all experienced and successful practitioners of excellence and we ask them to pick out the cases which they see as remarkable. We ask them to look for two key qualities from our winners: creativity and effectiveness.

But marketing continuously changes and evolves, as consumers become more sophisticated and demanding and the media for communicating with them ever more diverse. So the standards for marketing excellence change and in turn become more demanding.

We believe that The Marketing Society Awards for Excellence in association with *Marketing* set the standard of marketing excellence in the UK. They have established this reputation over a period of

more than 25 years, and they have always been based on the principle of searching out the best examples of different marketing techniques in action, that showcase great strategic thinking, great creativity and perfect execution.

In order to be a winner of one of the Society's Awards, marketers have to demonstrate that what they have done is outstanding in comparison with marketing in all industries not just their own particular sector.

If a marketing story has been good enough to impress our judges, then all marketers can learn from it – however senior they have become. The collection of case histories brought together in this book is the best of the best from the past four years of our Awards, and I am confident that it truly demonstrates *marketing excellence*. I have been truly inspired by these case studies and I hope you will be too.

Harlequins

Big brand thinking on a shoestring

Snapshot

Despite a tight budget a clever marketing campaign attracted a sell-out crowd for a Harlequins match that has turned into a brand in its own right.

Key insights

- Harlequins Football Club wanted to attract an audience that extended above and beyond regular rugby fans to create a branded event — The Big Game 2 — that would become a regular spot in the annual events calendar.
- The imaginative multi-media campaign punched far above its weight, with outdoor advertising, national and local media, extensive public relations (PR), sponsorship, player appearances, social networking, e-CRM, digital affiliates, radio and experiential marketing.
- More than 76,000 people filled Twickenham on the day of the match, breaking the record for a standard club fixture.

Summary

The Harlequin Football Club was founded in 1866 (although the first recorded game was not until 1867) as Hampstead Football Club and renamed in 1870. The club has won the Rugby Football Union Club

knockout competition on two occasions: The John Player Cup in 1988 and Pilkington Cup in 1991. It was also the first British side to win the European Shield in 2001, going on to win the renamed Parker Pen Challenge Cup again in 2004.

Rugby clubs are not known for big marketing budgets or indeed big brand thinking when it comes to marketing. The Big Game 2 was an attempt to fill Twickenham Stadium with 82,000 people for Harlequins vs. Wasps on December 27th 2009. That was a 600% increase on Harlequins' normal match-day attendance.

With just £120,000 to spend during a six month build-up, the club had to be creative to reach out to a non-traditional rugby audience by offering a branded package devised by Bamboo Marketing Communications that offered great entertainment, even better value and, hopefully, a first-class game of rugby. The result broke records for a standard club fixture and became a regular spot in the annual events calendar.

Ambitious goals

There were a number of objectives the club was keen to achieve by launching the campaign for The Big Game 2 (TBG2).

- It wanted to establish a new date in the Christmas sporting calendar and extend the reach of rugby in general by marketing this fixture as the perfect alternative Christmas entertainment option.
- In particular, it hoped to introduce a new audience to Harlequins in the hope it would widen its casual supporter base. This would transform the match from being just another Guinness Premiership pool match to a first-class day of family entertainment that would gain a place in people's Christmas holiday plans.

The campaign had to generate ticket sales far in excess of usual club attendance of 13,000. Its goal was to achieve a 78,000 capacity sell-out (actual capacity is 82,000, but, because of sponsors and box holders, only 78,000 could be sold.). To do that, it had to make the limited budget of £120,000 work

as hard as possible through contra-deals, careful media planning, player appearances and third party negotiation.

A core set of creative elements was developed for use in a rolling campaign from July to December 2009, each focusing on different 'reasons to go':

- Establishing recognition of the brand The Big Game 2 for future years so that it would be strong enough to stand apart from the core Quins brand.
- A contest featuring two opposing top international players (Nick Evans and Serge Betson), appealing to all rugby fans regardless of club affiliation.
- Stressing the value: a top game at Twickenham from only £10 for adults and £5 for children (Figure 1, 2 and 3).
- A great day's family entertainment even for those who were not regular rugby followers.



Figure 1, 2 and 3. Examples of posters and leaflets

A multi-layered strategy

This was followed by a multi-media campaign targeting a wide south east England audience, including all rugby fans, all sports fans and, crucially, casual or non-supporter friends and families planning alternative Christmas entertainment. A high-profile PR campaign was mounted offering unique access to the team with player front-cover shots and editorial content and sent to a wide variety of national and local press.

There were also roadside six and 48-sheet posters (Figure 4), while the autumn international Rugby Football Union (RFU) shuttle bus carried advertising and cross-track posters were placed in major south and west London stations. The club negotiated the appearance of three X Factor finalists keen to sing in front of what would be such a large audience (Figure 5). This alone extended the reach even further. Studio interviews by players and access to the X Factor secured a one-week on-air Capital

Radio listener competition to meet X Factor contestants backstage.

There were sponsorship and player appearances at over 40 London and local events. For instance, Danny Care and Ugo Monye switched on Kingston Christmas lights which gained exposure to over 55,000 people, in addition to Radio Jackie pre-publicity (Figure 6) and live interviews and local press interviews.

The Harlequin Honeys embarked on a six-month flyer campaign at relevant London and local events, bars, pubs and restaurants, including heavyweight presence at the autumn internationals. There were digital online partnerships with organisations such as Visit London, *Evening Standard*, SKY, RFU, Kempton Park, Virgin Active, RFU Supporters Club, Kew Gardens and Richmond Council, along with inclusion in their newsletters in return for low-value competitions.



Figure 4. Example of a poster

A constant stream of behind-the-scenes content featuring players was built up to feed onto Facebook fan pages and Twitter. There was also an ongoing e-shot campaign. Finally, photo shoots of various celebrities wearing the charity match-day shirt were organised which gave access to non-traditional rugby media. For example, Monye and David Strettle dressed in rugby kit with Caprice modelling her new range of lingerie with the theme: “You show me your kit and I’ll show you mine”

A clever mix of media

Outdoor

The principal aim was to spend as little as possible on conventional paid-for media. Where the club did need to spend money, the chosen media had to deliver impact and longevity. Outdoor was chosen as the primary vehicle to generate awareness in the two months prior to the event. Research showed that outdoor indexed well against the club’s core ABC1 family audience who are socially active, use public transport to get to and from work and spend a high proportion of their time out of the home.

Transport media (train stations) were used for their high dwell time, with 48-sheet and six-sheets selected to target ABC1 homes and key arterial travel routes. The CENSYS planning tool was used to map sites to homes and locations such as train stations, schools and offices, thereby minimising wastage and ensuring that the campaign had as great an impact as possible in the key engagement period of November to December. By booking when it did, the club’s two-week week campaign stayed up in many cases for over two months.



Figure 5 X Factor finalists



Figure 6. Radio Jackie pre-publicity



Figure 7. Lifestyle magazines



Figure 8. The big day

Newspapers

The main focus was on PR exclusives, with paid-for space in the *Evening Standard*.

Local magazines

Through negotiated ad spend/ PR contra-deals the club reached a combined circulation of 750,000 lifestyle magazines, delivered to ABC1 households in south and west London (Figure 7).

Buses

Advertising was placed on 15 RFU shuttle bus sides which then serviced normal routes on non-match days. These buses were parked in a line facing the 82,000 people exiting Twickenham Stadium during the autumn internationals.

Enjoying a big win

At 3.30pm on December 27th 76,716 people walked into Twickenham Stadium and sat down to be entertained by a giant sea eagle delivering the match ball, three X Factor finalists singing the Harlequins' club song, an Abba tribute band, opera singers and finally, as the teams took to the field, spectacular pyrotechnics launched from the stadium roof. This attendance broke the record for a standard club pool fixture. It also met the key objective of building a brand, complimentary to Harlequins but able to stand alone (Figure 8).

A big pat on the back

The achievement drew praise from many within the rugby community and one of the most respected commentators in the sport, Stephen Jones of *The Sunday Times*, wrote: *"The extraordinary success of Big Game 1 and Big Game 2 has changed the face of professional rugby in England completely. When more than 70,000 go along to watch a regular-season club match, albeit between deadly rivals such as Harlequins and Wasps, then everything we knew about rugby's appeal has to be rewritten. Other clubs will be anxiously searching for their own equivalent games and pressure on clubs to upgrade their capacities will be enormous.*

The courage and vision of Harlequins and the strategies of their marketing agency, Bamboo Marketing Communications, for the Big Games has reaped an incredible reward and has drawn thousands of new faces into rugby's orbit. And re-affirmed rugby's claim to be the best day out in sport."

And in his *Sunday Telegraph* column, Paul Ackford wrote: *"You know when an event is taking off when it comes with its own shorthand — TBG2. The Big Game: 2 for the uninitiated, and where were you hiding while the spectacle was marketed?"*

Chris Foy in *The Daily Mail* wrote: *"A vibrant atmosphere here at HQ as Big Game 2 passed off as a triumph of ambition and marketing."*

This game was not intended to be a major revenue generator and the intangible rewards of building a wider regular club supporter base and the re-building of Quins' brand equity following a difficult summer were impossible to quantify. But the game still generated a respectable profit on a marketing investment of £120,000.

Sponsors

Aviva - 300 Years of Insight

We're the world's sixth-largest insurance group and the biggest in the UK, with 46,000 employees that everyday serve 53 million customers worldwide.

We are committed to delivering one distinctive experience for our customers. Wherever they are, we want them each to feel that "no one recognises me like Aviva". Our global consumer research reveals that most of our competitors are particularly bad at recognising people's individual significance. This research also tells us that small human touches can make a huge difference to a customer's experience. Our aim is to make recognition the familiar quality that distinguishes Aviva from our competitors - just as Apple means user-friendliness and FedEx means reliability.

BT operates in over 170 countries and is one of the world's leading communications services companies. BT is a major supplier of networked IT services to government departments and multinational companies. It's the UK's largest communications service provider to consumer and business markets and is made up primarily of four customer-facing lines of business: BT Retail, BT Global Services, Openreach, and BT Wholesale.

BT operates in a thriving, multi-trillion pound industry that spans the whole world. In recent years the global communications market has been focused on convergence, whereby the boundaries between telcos, IT companies, software businesses, hardware manufacturers and broadcasters have become intertwined to create a new communications industry.

BT has evolved from being a supplier of telephony services to become a



"We know insurance isn't just about policies' and pensions; it's about people. That's why we're making our customers the big picture, putting a spotlight on them and our people. Putting customers at the heart of everything not only makes sense for them, it makes good commercial sense too." (Amanda Mackenzie, Aviva's chief marketing and communications officer)

We are working hard every day to build the company around what our customers want from us. That's why Aviva now ranks among the UK's top ten most valuable brands, according to the 2010 Brand Finance Global 500 survey and that success is something we are looking to replicate across the world.



leading provider of innovative communications products, services, solutions and entertainment products. BT's business customers range from multinational, multi-site corporations to SMEs and start-ups.

More than 80 per cent of the FTSE 100 and 40 per cent of Fortune 500 companies rely on BT for networking, applications and system integration. The National Health Service, Procter & Gamble, PepsiCo, BMW, Emirates, Fiat, Microsoft, Philips, and Unilever are just some of the organisations working with BT.

BT has been a driving force behind the success of 'Broadband Britain'. Thanks to the company's investment, nearly every home in Britain now has access to broadband and in September 2009, BT announced plans to more than double the availability of its fastest fibre broadband service.

MARKETING EXCELLENCE 2

“A treasure trove of examples covering the whole waterfront, from launching new brands to revitalising, sustaining and extending established ones, and from insights to advertising and sustainability. Whatever your business, it should make you proud to be a marketer, shake up your thinking and inspire you to go the extra mile.”

Professor Patrick Barwise, London Business School, Chairman of Which?

“This exciting book demonstrates how great marketing can solve the most difficult problems, through analysis, teamwork and creativity.

It contains 34 fascinating case studies, selected from hundreds of high quality entries to The Marketing Society Awards for Excellence. Those involved had the determination to win, and the courage to think differently. An inspiring read.”

Professor Hugh Davidson, Co-Founder, Oxford Strategic Marketing

“This is the textbook, the toolkit and the manual for marketing excellence.”

Cilla Snowball, Chairman, AMV BBDO

“These cases are a great source to stimulate your thinking. Some will stimulate new thoughts, some will unlock ideas from the back of your memory. All of them however are great fuel for growth.”

Keith Weed, Chief Marketing and Communication Officer, Unilever

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