CITY CENTRE MARKETING CAMPAIGN

THIS IS EDINBURGH
Background

After six long years, on May 31st 2014 Edinburgh launched its delayed tram line. It had been the subject of much debate, both national and international and had contributed to a distinct cooling of the resident’s love affair with the city centre’s shops, bars, restaurants and attractions. This came at a time when the impact of the recession coupled with an increase in online shopping was crippling the city centre and footfall was significantly down. Clearly something had to be done to help Edinburgh residents and workers regain their sense of civic pride.

The targets and objectives for the local requirement were clear and focused with the size of the opportunity estimated in terms of economic value at an incremental £50M.

To realise this we had to –

• Increase city centre footfall by 2% above UK average
• Increase retail sales turnover to be above UK average
• Reverse media negativity that had accompanied the tram project
• Create buy-in from city centre stakeholders, with a united voice

These were no small tasks given that –

• Local population and business owners were critical of the challenges that had previously faced the city centre
• The recession continued to bite
• Online shopping was growing at a rate of 17% annually

Marketing response to local resident requirement

After a rigorous selection process Marketing Edinburgh appointed a local agency to create and deliver a two year £1M campaign. This would be targeted at residents and those living in the surrounding areas with the purpose of getting them back into the city centre for shopping and leisure activities, particularly around the traditionally quieter periods after Christmas and in early Autumn when the Edinburgh Festival is over for another year.

The strategy of targeting these ‘shoulder months’ was quite deliberate. To give people tangible reasons to maintain their engagement with the city centre.

Following positive consumer testing, a brand marque was introduced to the public and made widely available across the city and surrounding areas.

“I love the campaign logo. It is understated. A bit like the city itself”
The campaign was designed to be confident, simple, self-assured and inclusive, conveying a sense of self-belief with the promise of an expectation that would be fulfilled - a window in which to showcase the city. The rationale was to feature real Edinburgh residents doing what they most enjoy, shopping, eating out, drinking and being entertained. Through research we identified three motivators for residents to come into town –

- Remember what a wide variety of choice of restaurants, shops and bars there are
- Remember Edinburgh has several attractions that are ‘worth the trip’
- Have you heard about these city centre ‘hidden gems’ we have unearthed?

The overarching ‘This is Edinburgh’ campaign thought was -

“It’s your city centre. Come back and enjoy it.”

Media selection to enable audience to become ambassadors.

Insight showed that to create a significant positive impact on local perceptions, we would need to deploy an innovative media strategy that would engage a number of media channels and give the impression the campaign was truly dominating the media landscape. The communication platforms chosen were therefore fully integrated to support one another –

- TV, Poster, Transport, On street furniture advertising
- Online pay per click display advertising
- Paid for Social Media, YouTube, Facebook and Twitter
- SEO on newspaper and magazine sites, Adwords, YouTube, Video on Demand
- Engagement activity - Competitions, Web content, Social Media and Email
- City centre events backed up with extensive PR support

Two attention-grabbing and emotive commercials were created using real Edinburgh residents. These people were deliberately not models or actresses and were cast ‘on-street’.

There is also a behind the scenes film which encapsulates our marketing strategy.
The campaign launched in February 2014, deliberately avoiding annually recurring busier periods - such as the summer when the tourist influx is greatest, or around the Christmas shopping/party season. This chimed well with the intention of supporting a year-round consistent footfall and revenue stream, but also ensured that the effectiveness measures of the marketing success could not be skewed.

TV was supported by posters and advertising on the sides of buses. There was also strong presence on Digital media with 2.4 million advertising impressions bought and Social Media were used extensively to bridge the gap between TV bursts. The campaign was carried through to a specially designed ‘This is Edinburgh’ website.
Several events were organised and advertised through street furniture in the city centre. These events were created within the traditionally quieter times in the city centre, to provide fresh reasons for people to rediscover it –

- **Edinburgh Fashion Week**
  A celebration of the city’s unique style and diverse shopping offering

- **Edinburgh Restaurant Festival**
  Ten delicious days of fantastic food offers and events

- **Film in The City**
  A fortnight of free outdoor films

- **Spa in The City**
  2 weekends of free health and beauty events

Two flavoursome weeks of foodie offers and exclusive menus at a range of prices. Go to town and try something new at over 60 participating venues.

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A celebration of eating out in the Capital.

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**Spa in the City**
After your retail therapy, get some fresh beauty therapy.

**Filming in the City**
Watch a free movie in the comfort of your own city.

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Results of local resident campaign

As the campaign unfolded, Edinburgh’s residents increasingly returned to the city centre and more importantly spent more.

Our initial target for footfall was to be 2% above the UK average and across the two year campaign, we achieved an average footfall growth of 2.86%, smashing the target by almost 50%, while retail sales exceeded the UK average by 1%. This amounted to just over £50million in economic impact for the city over the two year period.

So the core objective has been achieved and there is plenty of evidence to prove that it was the campaign that provided this catalyst for change.

Throughout the two years the campaign secured 420 pieces of media coverage against a target of 65. The combined ‘opportunities to see’ was smashed: 121 million+ against a target of 15 million. 87% of the coverage directly targeted an audience living within 2 hours commute of Edinburgh centre and 99% of was positive in tone.

- The target for unique web users per month was 30,000 and we achieved over 100,000
- The social media target of 54,000 followers has almost quadrupled, with This is Edinburgh now seeing a combined social audience of over 210,000 followers across all channels - Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, Vine, Google + and Periscope
- The target entries per competition were 1,000 and we have achieved 2x to 3x that regularly
- Paid for YouTube campaign achieved 11,000 views at a cost of only £1,500
- Over 45,000 locals attended the three events in 2015 where footfall was monitored

Some of the most pleasing results came during post campaign research into the extraordinary shift in attitude towards city centre shopping and visits.

95.6% said they felt more positive about the city centre than they did before the campaign. 88.6% stated that the “This is Edinburgh campaign’ had made a positive difference. 66.9% said they were far more likely to visit the city centre.

Overall Summary

By developing a coordinated and consistent approach to marketing and adopting a compelling, easily understood positioning, the ‘This is Edinburgh’ campaign has been a tremendous success as borne out by the metrics.

The resident campaign has now delivered £50M incremental economic value to the city, and the combined ROI against total spend of £1.08M can be estimated at 54:1.

In addition to impressive metrics Marketing Edinburgh has created a compelling suite of assets which will assist in delivering against messaging objectives and positions the city more effectively than ever before. A truly integrated, successful campaign.