



In a recession, when it's even more important to demonstrate the positive impact and effective use of money, the British Red Cross engaged a local digital agency to find an innovative way to inform how they had effectively spent money donated to them and raise awareness of what recovering from disasters really means.

Adrian Lennon, Client Strategy Director of Being Communications with Amanda George, Media Relations Officer of British Red Cross at Tsunami Anniversary Campaign HQ, London.

A Christmas To Remember Or One To Forget?

For many, Christmas' are their favourite time of the year - aside from all the manifold joys of the season - no one expects much work to get done, the streets are usually empty, the pressure is off. Very easily the eagerly anticipated 'time out' turns into an amorphous blur of warmth and comfort, where nothing particularly memorable happens from one day to the next.

However, Christmas 5 years ago stood out in a particularly memorable way which broke through this festive mist; when the Asian tsunami unleashed a wave of destruction stretching thousands of miles, creating a devastating trail of human suffering. In minutes, millions of people's lives were changed forever, and the world faced the huge challenge of responding

to a disaster the like of which no-one had ever seen. It was against this backdrop that local digital agency, Being Communications, were given the opportunity to be involved in something a bit different from the usual commercial solutions normally asked of them as a digital marketing services provider. As Peter Ellis, Managing Director of Being recalls, "To mark the fifth anniversary of the disaster, the British Red Cross wanted to take an innovative look back at the tragedy, the long road to recovery and the foundations which had been laid for a safer future. There was a requirement to develop various interactive elements as part of its Tsunami five year anniversary communications campaign over the Christmas 2009 period. The aim of

the communications campaign was to thank the public for supporting the British Red Cross in helping affected communities recover from the 2004 Asian tsunami, and to inform them of the work that had been done, and how they had spent money donated to them. They also wanted to raise awareness of what recovering from disasters meant, and why it is important." Being was asked to pitch for this work against other London-based digital agencies. It was an honour for a local Northern Ireland agency to be awarded the work, but as Peter recounts, "it was going to be a tougher than usual challenge in the wake of a recession, where typically, interest in donations dwindle as people conform to the old adage that charity starts at home."

"Nevertheless, it was a marketing opportunity to prove the strategy that focusing on deepening the engagement with supporters and encouraging people to get more closely involved with the issues would lead to an increase in the British Red Cross supporters database numbers, as well as, improve their future likelihood to donate. A strategy underpinned in recession when it's even more important to demonstrate the positive impact and effective use of donors' money," he added. Adrian Lennon, Being's client strategy and business development director, who led the campaign, summarised the aims of Being's approach. "Our aim was to create an innovative, engaging digital experience which would give the audience a deeper understanding of

the many challenges and decisions of the recovery process after the Boxing Day Tsunami 5 years ago. The result, an interactive challenge called 'Decisions for Recovery', put the player in the role of a British Red Cross recovery manager and presented a series of real-life scenarios, sometimes unexpected, that mentally and morally challenged the player/decision-maker. Player decisions in turn unlocked rich media and video that illustrated the reasoning behind British Red Cross' approach to re-building lives after the tsunami."

Drawing from the real-life dilemmas Red Cross staff faced, 'Decisions for Recovery' put the viewer in the hot seat and asked questions such as, "When so many are suffering, who do you help first? What kind of help do you offer and how do you decide between quick fixes which meet immediate needs and frustratingly slow but sustainable long-term projects?"

"We tried to make the scenarios as realistic as possible to reflect the difficult circumstances both the victims and the British Red Cross disaster recovery managers found themselves in," says Adrian Lennon. This is supported by Alastair Burnett, one of the British Red Cross disaster recovery managers. "The challenges were enormous, the decisions - as people visiting the website will see - were incredibly difficult, but today I feel very proud of what the Red Cross achieved to help rebuild people's lives and, more than that, build them back stronger."

"The support we received from the public was phenomenal and enabled us to mount our largest recovery effort since the Second World War. Now we want to tell the story of how the money people gave was spent and the difference it has made to people's lives." Being was also responsible for devising a range of digital assets



Postcard flyers distributed in run up to Tsunami 5 year anniversary.

to support the campaign. Uniting all these assets was the campaign theme "recovering a future... rebuilding lives after the tsunami". At the heart of this strategy was a dedicated website built and hosted by Being <http://www.recoveringafuture.org.uk>, hosting video content, and interactive maps of where BRC helped communities to rebuild their lives. For each country and location, case studies, images and videos were able to be unlocked to bring the programmes to life. Other assets included a viral video ad, online PR, print, and an expansive social media campaign including Facebook and Twitter, all with the ultimate aim to drive audiences to take the challenge. Peter Ellis also believes the campaign was a good testament to how effective digital marketing could be in these circumstances, "It is very measurable and flexible if you need to set something up or change what you are doing fast," he says. "One of the metrics digital gives us, which is harder to find using traditional media, is how people respond to a campaign and their degree of engagement. By making specific calls to action - downloading a video, for example,

or playing an online game - we can report back quickly and accurately the extent to which parts of a campaign have worked." The campaign launched in the week before Christmas and has already demonstrated extremely high engagement levels with 51% of visitors completing all 15 decisions questions in the game and sharing their scores via Facebook and Twitter. Game feedback ratings on quality and education are also performing well, currently standing at 4.45 out of 5.00.

"Standard marketing theory is that the greater the integration of any campaign, the higher the ROI," says Peter "The end result for the Recovering a future campaign was a closely integrated marketing communications strategy that continues to drive awareness of the charity's message virally via supporters' profile pages on social networks, and micro-blogging streams." Peter adds, "But more importantly those who had already donated now have a better understanding of how their contribution helped rebuild lives

after the tsunami, and consequently they will have a higher propensity to continue donating." Peter said Being were delighted to be involved in the national work for British Red Cross and he hoped they could continue using digital marketing strategies to further contribute to Non-Profit Organisations, adding "as many our clients know, profitability and improving ROI can also be good causes, and in the commercial context, digital marketing strategies are equally effective."

being
digital strategy. e-marketing
and technology solutions

Eye
Full details of Asian Tsunami Anniversary campaign can be found at www.recoveringafuture.org.uk or take the challenge yourself at www.recoveringafuture.org.uk/challenge. Further case study information available at www.beingonline.co.uk



Sample screens from British Red Cross Asian Tsunami 2004 'Decisions for Recovery' flash-based role playing game.