

Public Service, Social Welfare & Education

CAWLEY NEA \ TBWA

Irish Blood Transfusion – From Crisis To Consistency
Cawley Nea \ TBWA

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COMPANY PROFILE

An ideas company pretty much sums up what Cawley Nea\TBWA is all about. We've brought together the most passionate and creative people to be the architects of great ideas for our clients' brands. We don't think we're the best at what we do, we think we're the only people who do what we do. That's because we use the power of Disruption and Media Arts to find big brand ideas for clients, these ideas ultimately become the advantage our clients have over the companies they compete with. Cawley Nea\TBWA is part of the TBWA network with offices in 77 countries.

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

What makes this entry different is the absolute imperative for our advertising to be effective- because it's about saving lives. The IBTS simply **has** to meet the demand for blood through donations- otherwise patients won't receive critical, and often life-saving blood transfusions.

But that's not the only thing that makes it unique. This case study also goes against our every instinct, and everything we've learned as marketers and advertisers. You see, success won't be achieved through dramatic increases, as is the norm for other clients. Nor will it be achieved through dramatic

declines, as some public service bodies may strive for, such as the Road Safety Authority.

Instead, phenomenal and astonishing success would be determined by *steadiness* of supply. In a world where we all want more, more and still more, we only strived for consistency- just enough.

The IBTS seeks to maintain a minimum level of 7 days supply of each blood group in order to ensure a consistent national supply. However, this is precariously dependent on the number of donations they receive from volunteers on a week to week basis. Unfortunately from an historic point of view, this number can vary dramatically, with the result that ‘crisis’ communications often had to be issued when blood stock levels fell to 4 days.

A crisis communications campaign is obviously beneficial in the *immediate*- people respond in their droves, and the blood shortage ‘crisis’ is momentarily averted. However, critically, crisis communications have several long-lasting detrimental effects- namely unplanned advertising spend, wastage of excess donated blood, dissatisfied donors due to lengthy queuing times and the knock-on possibility of donors declining to return because of a negative experience in-clinic.

The real dilemma for the IBTS was the existence of a self-perpetuating cycle whereby a drop in supply levels to 4 days led to the issuing of a crisis communications campaign. In turn, this led to a dramatic increase in donations that meant wastage and donor dissatisfaction. This led to a decline in the donor retention rate, which in turn meant a decrease in stock levels. And the vicious cycle would begin again.

The brief Cawley Nea\TBWA and OMD received from the IBTS in May 2008 tasked us with finding an alternative way. We needed to achieve a consistent supply of blood while reducing the number of crisis communications they would need to issue throughout the year. To do this we would need to bring about a dramatic decrease in the number of days that the blood stock levels fell to 4. The task was mammoth, and success vital.

We conducted an exhaustive body of work together with the IBTS, to understand how we could achieve this. Our strategy was to find a new balance of calibration- in our communications message and our media choices, avoiding anything like a ‘crisis’, and whose constancy could go on to stabilize supply.

We did this by:

1) Creating an overarching and constant creative idea which would transcend all media, and motivate and remind donors to give blood regularly. We identified the key insight that the most motivating factor for donors to return and give blood again and again, was the ‘feel-good feeling’ they got after giving blood.

2) Using innovative media profiling and planning to consistently get this message to the right people, at the right time.

The creative idea, ‘You get more than you give’, would become an internal rallying cry for IBTS staff, and would appear in every piece of communications from the IBTS to the public. We redesigned the clinics themselves as well as DM. We ran TV and radio, press, outdoor and transit advertising consistently.

This dual strategy has resulted in exceptional improvements in brand image and affinity.

In terms of our core objective of achieving consistency in the national blood supply, we have attained phenomenal results: reducing by 56% (in the first 6 months of the year) and 89% (in the second 6 months of the year) the number of days when blood stock levels were at the crisis zone of 4 days. This has resulted in an overall reduction in the number of days when the blood supply was at crisis level by 76%.

We have managed this by marginally and carefully shifting the key figures within the cycle.

The retention rate has increased from 60.39% (70,126 retained donors) to 61.48% in 2008-2009 (70,980 retained donors) – a significant increase of 854 donors. Existing donors are donating more regularly and consistently ensuring a dependable supply, with donation frequency increasing from 1.64 times per year in 2007 to 1.67 times per year in 2009- equating to an extra 5,704 donations.

The campaign has achieved a 4% increase in the total number of donations, with a 25% reduction in the required spend by the Irish Blood Transfusion Service.

Ultimately this resulted in a 28% reduction in the required spend per donation received.

In effect, we have reduced the level of crisis days experienced by the IBTS by

76% with a €232,803 reduction in their required spend, a result that has far exceeded any expectations.

By creating consistency in our communications first, we have crucially achieved consistency in the national blood supply.

MARKETING OBJECTIVES

The core objective we were tasked with was attaining a consistent national supply of blood through our communications and media campaign. In order to achieve this, we would need to positively impact on a myriad of other objectives first.

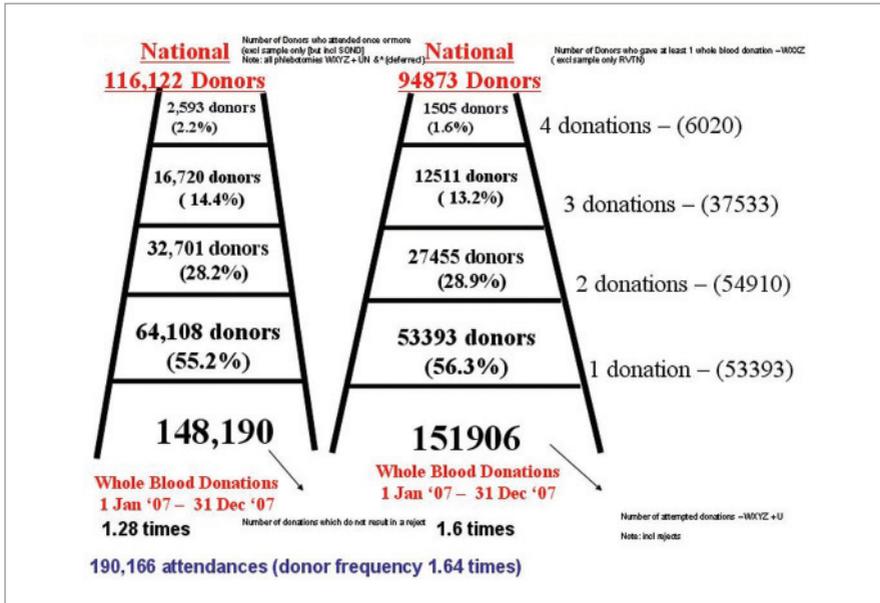
Improve Brand Image and Affinity

A Behavior and Attitudes study conducted in 2004 depicted a consumer image of the IBTS as being a somewhat 'conservative institution, representative of Old Ireland'. In order to ensure the IBTS remained relevant and trustworthy, with the respect and affinity of its donors, we would need to shift this perception to reflect the truth- that the IBTS is an internationally renowned, modern organization with positive and encouraging communications.

Reaching a Consistent Supply of Blood

To reach consistency in the national supply of blood we would need to:

- Focus on developing a 'consistent communications' strategy rather than 'crisis communications'- we wanted to eliminate these crisis communications and create more efficiency in terms of our media investment.
- Turn around the decline in the retention rate which had decreased from 61.58% in 2006-2007 to 60.39% in 2007-2008. In actual donor numbers this equates to 71,512 in '06-'07 and 70,126 in '07-'08 (Source: IBTS). In order to achieve consistency, we would need to actually increase the retention rates of our donors. Research showed that the number one reason donors lapsed was due to the length of time spent queuing during their last visit. (Cawley Nea\TBWA National Qualitative Research, November, 2008) Thus, we needed to ensure that donors did not spend too long queuing to give blood because of crisis communications campaigns.
- We would need our existing donors to donate more regularly and consistently in order to ensure a dependable supply. The IBTS loyalty ladder



showed that donation frequency was 1.64 times per year in 2007- we wanted to marginally increase this to between 1.66 and 1.68 in 2009.

The key metric by which we would be measured, was reducing the number of days that blood stock levels were in the ‘crisis’ zone of 4 days. In the first 6 months of 2007, there was on average 18 days* when the blood stock levels had reached the ‘crisis’ point of 4 days supply, well below the ‘optimum’ of 7 days. In the latter 6 months of 2007, there was 27 days* when this was true. We needed to significantly decrease these numbers in 2009 in order to ensure a consistent national blood supply.

THE TASK

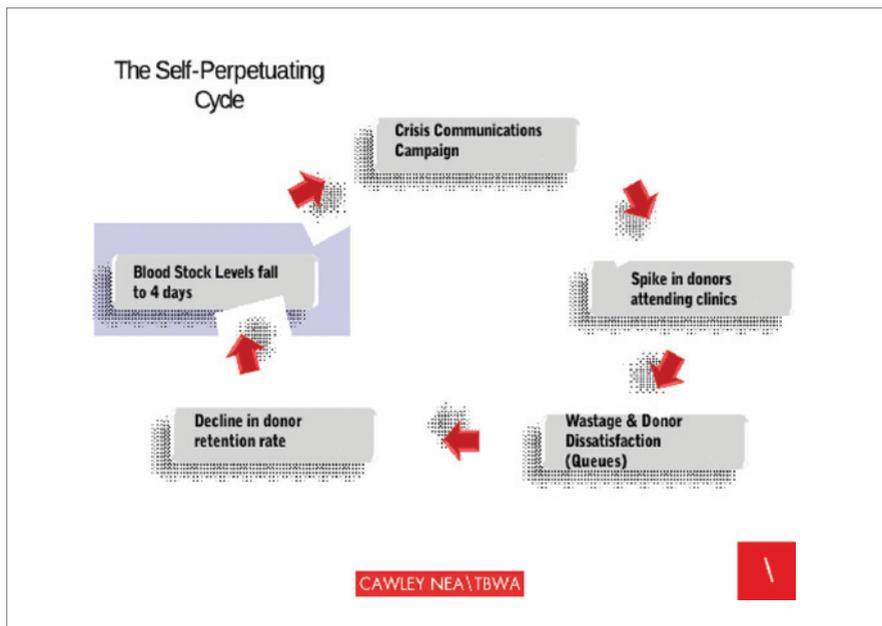
The business of blood donation is complex, with many different nuances which all need to be contemplated in order to ensure supply. The absolute onus is on eliminating shortages- we cannot risk the nation’s welfare. Blood transfusion services the world over rely on crisis communications to combat this.

The real dilemma for the IBTS was the existence of a self-perpetuating cycle whereby a drop in supply levels to 4 days led to the issuing of a crisis

communications campaign. Crisis communications could take the form of radio, press, TV, text messages and phone calls- they were inconsistent and unplanned, using a mix of guilt and fear messaging to implore donors to give blood.

The spike in donors attending clinics had several detrimental long term effects.

- **Wastage:** unfortunately the supply of blood we receive during an appeal can often outweigh the demand. As blood has a shelf life of 35 days, the excess needs to be disposed of, with resulting public and media disappointment and potential PR disasters. (Historically, the IBTS has strived to make the best use possible of this excess blood, often by donating it to disaster stricken countries.)
- **Dissatisfied donors:** because of the magnanimous response to our appeal, the clinics are filled with donors doing their bit to avert the crisis. Unfortunately this results in overcapacity, with lengthy delays and queues a consequence
- **The potential of donors lapsing:** research has shown that the primary reason donors' lapse, and fail to return to donate in the future, is down



to the length of time spent queuing and waiting to give blood during their last visit. (Cawley Nea\TBWA National Qualitative Research, November, 2008)

- Unplanned budget spend: crisis communications mean additional expenditure for unplanned and adhoc, tactical advertising

All of these factors led to a decline in the donor retention rate, which in turn meant a decrease in stock levels. And the vicious cycle would begin again.

We would need to eradicate the dependency on crisis communications, and the resulting after-effects they caused in order to move from crisis to consistency.

THE STRATEGY

We conducted an exhaustive body of work together with the IBTS, to understand how we could move from a crisis culture to one of consistent supply management.

We began by learning and studying about the organization, the brand and the donor experience. We conducted extensive secondary research on the concept of Consistent Supply Management, and studied academic sociological journal articles about donors and their motivations, barriers and experiences. We visited the clinics ourselves and spoke with donors about their thoughts and feelings throughout the experience. We spent hours in the National Blood Centre, the headquarters of the IBTS, learning about the ‘journey of blood’.

We conducted 8 in-depth interviews with blood donors, of varying degrees of commitment- ranging from one-off donors to those who had donated over 30 times. We asked them about their attitudes, behavior, their motivations to return, and the best part of their experience of giving blood.

We collated all of this and more, and held an all-day workshop with the full IBTS team, including their CEO. It was here that we discovered ‘the self-perpetuating cycle’ that existed between the inconsistent blood supply and crisis communications. Communications had swung from guilt to fear messaging and the brand story was inconsistently being told in a reactionary fashion, entirely dependent on the current blood supply levels at that moment in time. The blood supply was in turn characterized by peaks and troughs, inconsistent and impossible to predict.

Thus, our strategy was to lead with proactive and consistent communications, in order to achieve consistency of supply. We would go on to do this by:

- 1) Creating an overarching and constant creative idea which would transcend all media, and motivate and remind donors to give blood regularly. Our key insight centered on the knowledge that donors give so much- they give their precious time (work or leisure), their patience, their kindness, their blood, they give of their very selves. But the truth is they get even more. Time and again, donors talked about *‘the feel-good factor’*, the *‘natural high’* they get from giving blood- which they claimed was the most motivating factor in returning to give blood. (Cawley Nea\ TBWA In-Depth Donor Interviews, 2008) This corresponded with quantitative research which showed that,

‘Based on their experience, 100% of respondents said that they would return to give blood’. (IPSOS Mori Customer Survey, 2007)

Unfortunately this intention and memory of the ‘feel good factor’ fades, and so our job was to remind people that they ‘get more’ than they give, when they donate blood.

- 2) Using innovative media profiling and planning to consistently get this message to the right people, at the right time. Instead of traditional demographic profiling, we focused on attitudinal. Using TGI statements, we isolated a large group of people who we deemed more likely to be blood donors, or have the potential to become donors- we called this audience Ethicals, of whom there were 1,060,000 people.

IDEA AND COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITY

The Idea

The consistent creative idea was:
‘You Get More Than You Give’

A simple expression of our insight yet one which would instantly and effectively resonate with donors. We created a written manifesto of what ‘You Get More Than You Give’ means- with an extract below.

“You get more than you give.

You get to do something good,
just because it is the right thing to do.

You get to save a life in a lunchtime.

You get to be part of something
that's bigger than all of us,
but needs every one of us.

You get to be the reason
a child goes home healthy to his family.

You get to help others, without judgements
about colour or race, age or social class.

You get to inspire hope,
where hope is most needed.

You get proof that you are the kind of person
we all want to be- generous, good, kind.

**And all you give
Is blood.”**

This manifesto would go on to form the creative inspiration and template for all communications activity.

‘You Get More Than You Give’ became the single-minded message across all communications, beginning with an internal briefing to the IBTS staff in the National Blood Centre. It would become an internal rallying cry for IBTS staff, and would appear in every piece of communications from the IBTS to the public.

We created one core TV execution, depicting vignettes of people doing good deeds for one another, highlighting the resulting positive feeling. We created 4 radio ads, all developed from the manifesto above. Outdoor and press followed the same consistent format, with donors giving a testimonial as to their positive experience outweighing what they put in. Finally, we re-designed the IBTS website to facilitate this message, as well as creating an IBTS Facebook page as part of our strategy to reflect the brand’s modern and relevant image.

We designed a whole series of in-clinic communications with this core message, and even re-designed the in-clinic folder which donors need to read before donating, to reflect this brand idea. We re-designed the entire DM campaign, focusing on our core message of ‘You Get More Than You Give’, and since launch, the manifesto in its entirety has been included on the back of every letter. Finally, we have completely re-designed the IBTS Donor Awards Ceremony to incorporate the ‘You Get More Than You Give’ theme.

The Communications Activity

In aspiring to develop a communications programme that would deliver consistent levels of blood supply we needed to be certain that we were delivering our message to the right people. The creative idea of ‘You Get More Than You Give’ was as crucial to the development of a targeting and touchpoint strategy as it was to creative development.

We were able to develop a target audience group in TGI based on attitudinal profiling that we called the ‘Ethicals’. This group of people answered positively to statements such as “I try to be nice to people as much as I can”, “I would be willing to volunteer my time for a good cause” or “I only buy products from a company with whose ethics I agree” to name but a few. We were then able to develop a media strategy that was able to tightly focus on ‘Ethicals’ reducing media wastage and ensuring that we could develop a more consistent and less reactionary communications approach.

The change in communications strategy from old to new was initially delivered through television which had the power to develop the emotional connection that was at the core of the ‘Ethicals’ sensibilities. The TV buying had a strong bias towards the ‘Ethicals’ favourite programmes. We adopted a similar programme led approach to the radio activity. We focused on programmes where sensitive issues might be debated but handled in a careful and responsive manner. The likes of Ray Darcy, Gerry Ryan, Tom Dunne and Ian Dempsey all featured heavily in the ‘Ethicals’ repertoire.

Broadsheets featured strongly in press selections as Ethicals tended to be more interested in the economy and current affairs- reflected in their increased consumption of ‘serious’ media.

One of the most iconic parts of our communications strategy was the development of the IBTS Facebook page and the subsequent interaction with donors on this page is a living embodiment of the ‘Ethicals’ spirit.

Total Media Spend on the campaign to end of 2009 was €94,071.

THE RESULTS

This two fold strategy of consistent creative and media messaging has ensured that donors actually give blood more regularly and consistently, and has resulted in a dramatic decrease in the number of days that blood stock levels have been at the ‘crisis’ 4 days. By creating consistency in our communications, we have crucially achieved consistency in the national blood supply.

Improved Brand Image and Affinity

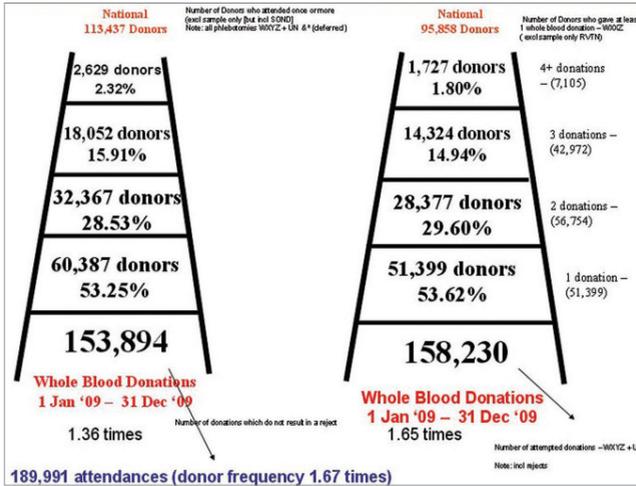
There has been a phenomenal reaction to the messaging as demonstrated by B&A qualitative research carried out earlier this year:

“Communications based on the brand idea ‘You get more than you give’ – TV, radio, outdoor, website and facebook page - are seen as a novel approach. It does not employ the expected crisis moments, rather, it accentuates the positives in a more emotive way and explicitly tells (perhaps for the first time) the benefits to the donor in psychological terms. “

The IBTS brand image has improved dramatically from that of a ‘traditional, conservative institution’ (B&A, 2005) to one which is ‘more professional, more efficient, well organized and managed, more modern and dynamic’ (B&A, 2010)

Reaching a Consistent Supply of Blood

- A focused targeting strategy enabled us to nearly double the amount of weeks that the campaign was active. More active weeks helped create a more balanced management of blood supply levels. The TV campaign reached 72% of our target market while the radio campaign reached 76%. (This excludes a sponsorship we did with Spin FM which indexed strongly for and helped recruit younger ‘Ethicals’).
- The retention rate had fallen from 61.58% in 2006-2007 to 60.39% in 2007-2008. Since our campaign has launched, we have managed to increase the retention rate from 60.39% (70,126 retained donors) to 61.48% in 2008-2009 (70,980 retained donors) – a significant increase of 854 donors.
- Existing donors are donating more regularly and consistently ensuring a dependable supply. The IBTS loyalty ladder demonstrates that donation frequency increased from 1.64 times per year in 2007 to 1.67 times per



year in 2009. In terms of actual donations, that is an increase of 5,704 from 148,190 donations in 2007 to 153,894 in 2009.

Finally, and most importantly, we have made a dramatic impact on the consistency of blood stock levels in 2009. This was the key metric by which success would be measured, a reduction in the number of days that blood stock levels were in the ‘crisis’ zone of 4 days.

In the first 6 months of 2009, there was on average 8 collective days when the blood stock levels had reached the ‘crisis’ point of 4 days supply, well below the comparative figure for 2007, which was 18 days. In the latter 6 months of 2009, there was just 3 days when the IBTS had a 4 day supply.

Thus we have eliminated by 56% the time when blood stock levels were at 4 days in the first 6 months of the year, and by 89% in the second half of the year. This has resulted in an annual reduction of 76%.

Clare McDermott, Marketing Executive of the IBTS, believes: “In two years we have achieved a new brand idea and image and rolled out targeted media campaigns to altruistic audiences that identify with blood donation. Donors have recognized the changes in our communications and given positive feedback at events and through recent research.

I have seen a more regulated blood supply where holiday seasons that typically present a challenge for us are becoming less of an issue thanks to donor attendances and consistent targeted messaging.

As of August 2010, 88% of donors are proud to be blood donors.”

IMPACT ON BEHAVIOURAL ATTITUDE & PAYBACK

In 2008, from May to December we spent €364,133 on media. For the 2009 year, we achieved significantly more on a media spend of €329,938.

In 2007, the total marketing spend was €940,803. In 2009, we only required a total marketing spend of €708,000.

By reducing the number of crisis communications, we have nearly doubled the amount of weeks that the campaign was active.

Due to the nature of blood donation services it is not possible to calculate a Return On Marketing Investment based on revenue generated. We can, however, analyse the return in relation to the number of additional donations received relative to the investment in marketing during the campaign.

Per the chart below you can see that the campaign has achieved a 4% increase in the total number of donations, with a 25% reduction in the required spend by the Irish Blood Transfusion Service.

Ultimately this resulted in a 28% reduction in the required spend per donation received.

In effect, we have reduced the level of crisis days experienced by the IBTS by 76% with a €32,803 reduction in their required spend, a result that has far exceeded any expectations. We consider this to be a fantastic example of effective use of our client’s money to achieve the desired result.

	2009	2007	Change	% Return
Total number of donations	153,894	148,190	5,704	4%
Total Marketing Spend	€ 708,000	€ 940,803	-€ 232,803	-25%
Spend per donation	€ 4.60	€ 6.35	-€ 1.75	-28%

** Calculated by adding the number of days blood supply levels at 4 days across the 6 blood groups (O+, O-, A+, A-, B+, B-)*