

IBTS

Blood is thicker than water

Agency: Irish International BBDO
 Client: Irish Blood Transfusion Service (IBTS)
 Team: John Keating
 Rachel Haslam
 Barry Dooley
 Adrian Dowling
 Damian Hanley



INTRODUCTION

The IBTS has managed to safeguard Ireland’s self-sufficiency in blood whilst simultaneously taking the n make the Irish blood supply one of the safest in the world. What makes this case study compelling is not ju advertising task on a limited budget in difficult times, it is the fact that the IBTS had no marketing commun disposal other than advertising to drive donations.

BACKGROUND

From February 1994 the IBTS was subjected to perhaps one of the most protracted periods of adverse public an Irish service provider. By the middle of 2001 the IBTS found itself in an unenviable position. Its corporat suffered serious damage. Moreover, it had to introduce a precautionary vCJD safety measure that had the e the number of eligible donors by 12%. If blood supply fell short of demand, elective surgery would have to be postponed to facilitate emergency transfusions. The efficient functioning of the whole Irish hospital system was under threat.

MARKETING OBJECTIVES

The IBTS set an objective of increasing Irish blood donations by 12%, staggered as evenly as possible throughout the year. They set out to do this in a way that would reposition the IBTS as a caring and progres that Irish people can trust.

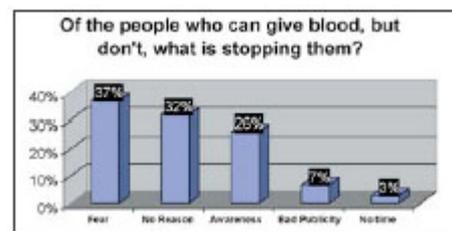
THE TASK

At a time when there had never been fewer Irish people either available or willing to donate, Irish International BBDO were tasked with increasing blood donations by 12% on an ongoing basis and with rehabilitating the public image of the IBTS.

THE START POINT

A Lansdowne quantitative study commissioned by IBTS in 1999 and 2001 revealed that, while over 70% of people were aware that donating blood can save lives, and 60% believed that they were eligible to donate, only 31% of Irish people had ever donated. So, what was stopping them?

Clearly, the most common reason for people not donating blood was ‘fear’ – fear of needles (16%), fear of weakness (8%), fear of finding out bad news about their health (3%) and fear of contracting an infectious disease (10%). Most of these fears were based on mis-information or lack of information.



These fears, while unfounded, were growing rather than subsiding. When we compared the 2001 statistics w 1999, we could see that bad publicity as a reason had almost doubled from 4% to 7%. Allied to this, the be blood ‘is not safe for you’ has also doubled from 5% to 10%.

Finally, interrogation of the ‘low awareness’ reason for non-donation revealed that this related, not to

unawareness of the need for blood donation, but to lack of understanding of the urgency for them personally was required was not an 'awareness' campaign, but a 'call to action', one that would dramatically increase personal relevance of blood donation and increase the perceived urgency of acting on good intentions.

THE STRATEGIC SOLUTION

65% of those questioned by Lansdowne said they would be encouraged to give blood on a 'friend, relative or myself' basis, either if a friend or relative needed blood, if a friend or relative asked them or if they operated themselves.

The Irish International team concluded that the advertising had to work in a more direct and intimate way if it was going to elicit the response we needed. The strategic solution was to 'bring home' the ongoing recruitment in terms of both personal responsibility for the act and the personal implications of the act.

The key message was: 'It is up to you to make a difference to the lives of people who matter to you'

We also wanted to highlight the fact that one in four people in Ireland will need a blood transfusion at some point in their lives. This would demonstrate to people the chances of them knowing someone who needed a donation or of themselves.

THE CREATIVE IDEA

Dramatise the personal imperative to donate blood.

RECRUITMENT ADVERTISING

In 2002 the 'Excuses' TV and radio creative route used quotes from blood transfusion patients in hospital to highlight the triviality of the excuses normally given by non-donors when compared with the gravity of serious illness. This was used to re-enforce the TV executions on commuter, bus and train cards.

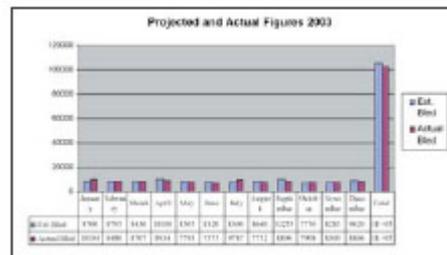
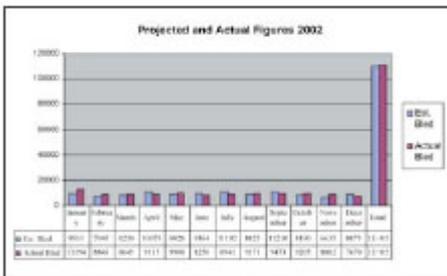
In 2003, we re-ran the 'Excuses' TV but decided to refresh the creative message in other media, namely outdoor, press and radio. The new creative route dramatised the times when we all want to help our friends from an accident or illness and suggested that donating blood was the most useful thing we could do for them.

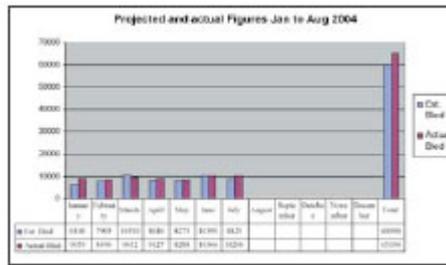
MOBILE CLINIC ADVERTISING

We used regional radio and press to announce the arrival of a mobile clinic in a particular area but added a strong call to action that tied in with the 'personal imperative' tone of the recruitment campaign. A recruitment advertising campaign based on car stickers was also developed to drive home the ongoing imperative to donate blood.

THE RESULTS

The IBTS met the national demand for blood on a monthly basis between January 2002 to date without any blood being cancelled and without any blood being imported. They did this despite a 12% reduction in the base of donors from April 2001 and a further 5% reduction in the same base from May 2004. In these charts, 'est. bleed' is national demand, while 'actual bleed' is national supply.





The IBTS believe that advertising activity tends to correlate directly with donation levels. They also note the e IBTS advertising has managed to positively influence its media coverage in Ireland. In May 2004 positiv increased donation levels to the point where the IBTS reduced its planned advertising spend for three mo the work done to reposition the IBTS in the eyes of key influencers of public opinion.

PAYBACK OR RETURN ON INVESTMENT

The IBTS is unique in the sense that its ROI has to be measured in a different way to any other business organisation. The effectiveness of its communications spend is based on maximising the safety and continuity supply to those whose lives depend on it at minimum cost.

The IBTS spent €334k in 2002, €468k in 2003 and is planning to spend €625k in 2004 (The figure for this allocation of €45k for vCJD and a reserve of €30k). Based on total donation levels, the IBTS estimate the medi of each donation procured at an average of €3. Relative to the cost of many other commodities in 'Rip Off Ir that importing blood is not an option (in terms of safety or cost), this represents remarkable value for money.

SUMMARY

Maintaining the blood supply is no ordinary public service. If blood is not available on the day it is required, s carried out. Yet, blood donation is entirely voluntary. It offers no material reward or personal recognition a years the IBTS has had to restrict its pool of available donors in the most difficult of circumstances.

Media advertising has been the only marketing communications tool used by the IBTS to safeguard the conti supply. There is a direct correlation between blood donation levels and media advertising, which has also h the IBTS in the eyes of the Irish public. All this has been achieved on a limited budget that places the aver each donation at only €3.

Advertising has been put to many uses in its history, some noble, some less so. Rarely has it been pressed cause so immediate, so pervasive (one in four of us will need a blood transfusion in our lifetime), so deman The IBTS advertising campaign has helped to ensure that more Irish people realise they are closer than they life.



They need blood.
NOT EXCUSES.
GIVE BLOOD
www.ibts.ie

They need blood.
NOT EXCUSES.
GIVE BLOOD
www.ibts.ie

They need blood.
NOT EXCUSES.
GIVE BLOOD
www.ibts.ie



MAKE THEM
FEEL BETTER,
PAY US A VISIT.
GIVE BLOOD

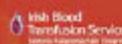
Infoline 1850 731 137 www.ibts.ie



Save a life at
lunchtime.



GIVE BLOOD
Infoline at 1850 731 137



15 O'Connell Street, Dublin 2. Hours: Mon 9.00am to 5.00pm, Tu 9.00am to 5.00pm (except Bank Holidays).

www.ibts.ie