

Case study

Moving Pudsey into the digital age

Organisation BBC Children in Need

Campaign Pudsey brand refresh

Agency Fallon

BBC Children in Need runs the eponymous annual fundraising campaign and provides grants to help disadvantaged children and young people in the UK.

Background

The Pudsey brand redesign was prompted by independent research commissioned by BBC Children in Need. It showed that Pudsey commanded an impressive 98 per cent recognition rate among the public and was regarded as a national institution. At the same time, however, many felt that the bear himself was looking tired.

The charity decided Pudsey needed a makeover in preparation for its 2007 appeal. The intention was to retain existing supporters while continuing to attract new donors. The rebrand aimed to present Pudsey as interactive rather than static, signifying a move into the digital age.

How it worked

The campaign hinged on the launch of an animated Pudsey character that would reflect the brand values of fun, inclusiveness and youth. The interactive Pudsey was intended to engage a new generation of supporters.

The charity also decided to update Pudsey's image. The bandage bandana



All hail Pudsey: the new bear is designed to engage a new generation of supporters

across his eye was replaced by a multi-coloured version. The use of a variety of colours – pink, orange, blue and green – meant there was more scope to create different designs for marketing material.

A new appeal strapline – “do something different” – reflected Pudsey's new image and interactive capabilities. A new-look website was launched to complement the brand realignment. Pudsey was now an active character, baking a cake to illustrate fundraising ideas, for example. The Pudsey merchandise range was extended to incorporate the new colours.

Results

The redesign went down extremely well at the BBC, which led to more exposure in BBC programmes. Children in Need's internal BBC intranet site saw a 44 per cent increase in referrals. The public was also impressed. Research showed that supporters and non-supporters, across age ranges, liked the changes. The number of hits on the fundraising section of the charity's website rose by 68 per cent.

The 2007 appeal raised a record £37m – £3m more than Children in Need had anticipated.

Mathew Little

Expert view



Claire Syrett, client partner, Curious

To ensure they remain relevant, brands must continually re-appraise themselves. But while

bored marketers are often tempted to change everything for the sake of it, it's vital to treat strong brands with respect and try to evolve the component parts, rather than lurch from one identity to the next.

In this context, Children in Need has made a smart realignment, keeping enough of the much-loved old image, but introducing a more contemporary, dynamic Pudsey. It's a small change that makes a big difference.

Moving away from the overtly childish typography makes sense. Children will still focus on the bear, and adults have something more engaging to look at. It is now child-friendly, rather than childish. The new Pudsey also seems less vulnerable – he's still got the bandage, but he's definitely a cooler bear. The “do something different” line needs more warmth, however. It makes me think of supermarket shopping.

A lot of success has been attributed to the redesign, but it's likely that more exposure on BBC TV would have had the same effect with the old identity. The £3m increase in the 2007 appeal would have been because of a host of factors.

Creativity: 4

Delivery: 4

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10