

# AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN **PUBLIC RELATIONS 2020**



# Best Public Sector or Civil Service Campaign



Toby O'Rourke (7) takes a journey using the Virtual Reality installation at Carlow library. Photo by Finbarr O'Rourke.

## Campaign

Your Library, Take a Closer Look

## Description of Campaign

The first ever national campaign to promote public libraries took a multiplatform approach to achieve a 17% increase in new library members, while driving awareness of innovative library services for all ages and the whole community.



## Organisation

Local Government Management Agency (LGMA)

## Background to the Campaign

Irish public libraries are a local authority service, funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD).

In 2018, a new five-year public library strategy was developed and launched. It included a range of actions towards an overall aim of increasing library membership from 16% of the population to 30% by 2022.

The strategy identifies promotion and marketing as one of six enablers to its success, noting that the impact of new services, resources and technologies will be limited if people are not made aware of them in new and engaging ways.

As an action point under the strategy, it was agreed that the LGMA would run a national campaign to promote libraries and their services, to attract users of all ages, increase membership, and publicise the library as a community resource.

LGMA Communications, in collaboration with the Libraries Development Unit, developed an initial plan for the campaign to secure funding from DRCD. The plan focused on maximising awareness of library services through advertising, marketing, and public relations.

Once funding was agreed, Ogilvy Dublin were appointed to develop the creative advertising approach and assets and Wavemaker were appointed to supply media buying services.

The campaign ran in two phases: the first was an initial advertising stage to generate broad awareness of library services while the second focused on PR with the focal point of a National Library Open Day event.

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## Statement of Objectives

The overall objective of the campaign was to support the National Library Strategy goal of increasing library membership to 30% of the population by 2022.

In support of that overall objective, several measurable campaign aims were established. Means of gauging the campaign's success in achieving these aims were set (see measurement and evaluation).

The aims were:

- To create a positive image of a modern innovative library service offering a range of free services that are needed and wanted by the community.
- To support local library promotion campaigns nationwide.
- To increase library membership.
- To increase online joiners.
- To increase visits to the Libraries Ireland website.

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## Programme Planning and Strategy

### Timeline

This campaign was developed and delivered between October 2019 and February 2020.

The advertising phase went live on January 20th, 2020 with ads running across multiple channels for up to 4 weeks.

The second phase of the campaign had a PR focus and was built around and culminated with National Library Open day on February 29th.

### Resources

The campaign was managed by LGMA Communications, including creative development; media relations; digital and social management; and, stakeholder and supporter engagement.

The communications team worked closely with the LGMA Libraries Development team, library services, the Department of Rural and Community Development and agency partners (Ogilvy and Wavemaker) on the development and roll-out of the campaign.

### Audience

This was the first ever national promotional campaign for public library services. For that reason, it targeted a wide audience for core messaging, while speaking also to target groups and demographics via specific channels and with specific messaging, in line with the key library programmes and services. These groups included:

- Parents/children.
- Students (second-level and third-level).
- Commuters.
- Those with an interest in reading and literature.

### Insight and messaging

From discussion with library staff and monitoring sentiment on social media, we could see that our audience felt



positively towards libraries but were often surprised by the range of services on offer, in particular the range of items available, including digitally, and the convenience of the national single service.

We noted that many people choose to pay for services and items available for free at the library, so we sought to address any potential reasons for that, e.g. perceived lack of convenience, perception that the library won't have recent releases, etc.

Given that recommendations from friends and family are the most credible form of advertising, the campaign focused heavily on social media and aimed to get people talking about their library experience both online and in person.

Based on these insights and our target audiences, specific services to highlight were identified and messages were developed for use across marketing and PR.

- Libraries have lots to offer for everyone.
- Libraries are convenient.
- Libraries are modern.
- Libraries have a lot going on for you and your community.

Working with Ogilvy, we established an overall campaign line that could encompass the messages above, Your Library, Take a Closer Look, and worked on creative development around that line and approach.

## **Channels**

Considering the aims, audience and messaging, a mix of paid, earned, and owned media was used to create mass awareness.

- Advertising across radio, cinema, video on demand, pre-roll, digital display, social, OOH (targeted at key audiences, as identified).
- Media engagement.
- Stakeholder engagement.
- Social media engagement.
- Events.
- Libraries Ireland and library websites.
- Newsletters.
- In-house display channels (screens, posters, etc.).

## **Roll-out and actions**

During the first phase of the campaign, while paid advertising was running, PR efforts focused largely on amplification through supporter/stakeholder engagement and social media interaction.

The second phase of the campaign hinged around generating media coverage for libraries in the context of National Library Open Day.

## **Media engagement**

Media engagement was central to achieving maximum impact for the campaign. We targeted national and local media including print and broadcast and generated significant coverage that carried our key campaign messages.

This was achieved through direct engagement with national media by LGMA Communications while also supporting library services to engage with their local media by providing talking points, template press releases and imagery.

We issued timed media releases and photographs including to launch National Library Open Day and to announce the most borrowed books of 2019. In addition, targeted releases were provided to specific outlets/correspondents and pitches were made to media aligned to our audiences (parenting, consumer, youth, etc.)

Significant coverage was achieved on RTÉ Radio and TV, Newstalk, Today FM, Irish Independent, Irish Times, Irish Examiner, Journal.ie, Irish Mirror, RTÉ Guide as well as coverage across regional papers, on local radio and specialist online publications.

## In-library channels

The involvement and buy in of libraries and librarians was key to driving this campaign. City and County Librarians were kept informed of campaign development at all steps. A call was issued to all libraries to nominate library staff to appear in the filmed ad, which helped to generate 'buzz' and gave us local angles on launch.

A pack was developed for libraries to support each phase of the campaign. The pack included social media assets, template press releases, media talking points, posters, and other visual materials.

## Engagement and outreach

Our network of stakeholders and supporter organisations were an important amplifier of our messaging. They were contacted via social media and email to ask them to share content about the campaign via their own channels, e.g. website, newsletters, etc.

We also contacted well-known personalities to seek their support. Those who showed strong support and aligned well to our target audiences were asked to supply a 'blurb' to promote libraries, which was used for additional social media content.

We relied on the local relationships libraries have with their communities to get the message out locally. In particular we leveraged those relationships to distribute posters within communities.

## Social and digital

Significant effort was dedicated during the campaign to engaging on social media with influential figures and with members of the public. Timely opportunities to make libraries a part of the conversation were exploited and opportunities to engage were responded to.

Two incidents in particular occurred during the campaign that were very helpful. Firstly, President Michael D. Higgins donated some of his personal collection to the libraries. Secondly, we approached Conor Pope to write an article about libraries from a consumer angle. He subsequently tweeted a question for research and generated more than 1,000 extremely positive responses, getting libraries trending in the run up to the Open Day.

The Libraries Ireland website was the primary contact point for the audiences. It was updated to reflect the campaign visual identity and to give campaign messages prominence. Web images and templates were also developed and distributed to libraries to allow them to update their websites.

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## Measurement

The campaign was evaluated against the objectives as set. The means of evaluation was established ahead of the campaign.

1. To create a positive image of a modern innovative library service offering a range of free services that are needed and wanted by the community.

Significant media coverage across radio, TV and print media reflected the key messages established and covered the key services intended.

The campaign hashtag was used more than 6,500 times during the campaign by 700 accounts. The campaign trended on Twitter throughout National Library Open Day and led to a significant increase in followers across all social media channels.

Online sentiment was overwhelmingly positive.

2. To support local library campaigns nationwide.

The campaign pack provided to libraries was used by all authorities and all increased their promotion activity during the period of the campaign, including online and with local media.

Feedback from County and City Librarians was very positive.

Library services across the country ran events for National Library Open Day.

**3. Increase library membership.**

Over the period of the campaign, the number of new library members increased by 17% compared to the same period in the previous year.

**4. Increase online joiners.**

Over the period of the campaign, those joining the library online increased by 90%.

**5. Increase visits to Libraries Ireland website.**

There was a 228% increase in visitors to the Libraries Ireland website during the campaign. 93% of users during the period were new users.

As the campaign ended just days before this submission it is not possible to examine longer term impact at this stage.

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