

AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN **PUBLIC RELATIONS 2020**



Best Communications Campaign by a Registered Charity



Campaign

The Shop that Nearly Wasn't

Description of Campaign

Breakthrough Cancer Research opened the world's first shop and events space 100% stocked and staffed by cancer survivors on World Cancer Day. Seeking 100% survival for 100% of cancers, it called for greater investment in cancer research and was designed to raise the charity's national profile.



Public Relations Consultant

ETC, the Events, Tourism & Communications Agency



Client

Breakthrough Cancer Research

Background to the Campaign

Cancer survival rates are improving every day, but not for all cancers. Survival rates vary from 99% for some cancers like breast or testicular, to just 8%, 15% or 24% for others like pancreatic, lung or oesophageal.

Breakthrough Cancer Research (Breakthrough) specialises in finding new treatments for poor prognosis cancers. To raise more funding to tackle survival inequality, we needed to raise awareness.

Although Breakthrough already had a strong standing in Munster, it was relatively unknown nationally. Its primary audience to date was people above 65 years. However, they wanted to recruit the next generation of activists and donors throughout Ireland – those aged 35-55. But research identified that this audience had donation fatigue from a social media culture of 'JustGiving' appeals from friends and family. In addition, demands on their time and attention are constant. They would only engage if they felt their contribution could make a difference. Appeals to sympathy or a "guilt-trip" would not work. Research showed our audience would only engage with a positive message, where they could play their part in making a better future.

To raise funding nationwide, Breakthrough needed to create a new, attention grabbing way to show the good they do and the hope they create every day.

So ETC, in partnership with creative agency The Brill Building, who developed the concept, created a campaign that would grab attention, headlines and engagement – a campaign that was only possible because of cancer research... **The Shop That Nearly Wasn't** – a pop up shop in Temple Bar, 100% stocked and staffed by cancer survivors.

The originality of the campaign and PR delivery aimed to reflect the unique nature of Breakthrough's work.

By overcoming challenges to ensure we were able to open the shop on World Cancer Day, and by bringing a variety of interesting, credible and high profile ambassadors like Michael Flatley and Senator David Norris on board, we were able, with 'pitch persistence', to drive a high level of interest with the media. The campaign's overall reach surpassed even our own objectives.

Statement of Objectives

1. The primary aim was awareness, to raise the profile of Breakthrough Cancer Research nationally through an engaging and impactful campaign, and to engage a new younger audience.
2. Show the power of research to change the future for the better. We needed an activation that was a positive celebration of what has been achieved and a call to action for more research for the cancers left behind – those with low survival rates.
3. Highlight the urgent need for greater investment in cancer research.
4. Create a campaign that would resonate with and engage cancer survivors and people connected to those affected by cancer.
5. Celebrate the varied contribution cancer survivors make to society.
6. Secure National broadcast, print and online media, to ensure that the campaign would have significant reach and cut-through.
7. Engage with celebrities and influencers to heighten the profile of the campaign.
8. Raise funds if possible (a secondary goal).

Programme Planning and Strategy

The Campaign

Breakthrough Cancer Research opened the world's first shop and events space, entirely stocked and staffed by cancer survivors, in Temple Bar, Dublin on World Cancer Day (February 4th 2020), to raise its national profile, engage with a younger audience, and highlight the urgent need for greater investment in cancer research.

The shop sold art, photography, books, crafts, clothing, and even protective sports gear, all made by cancer survivors of all ages, from all over Ireland.

The aim of 'The Shop that Nearly Wasn't' was to showcase the creative contribution cancer survivors make and to raise awareness for more investment in cancer research, to make more survivors. The name of the Shop reflected the fact that improved survival rates are only possible because of cancer research.

We engaged many high-profile cancer survivors in the campaign, including Michael Flatley, Senator David Norris, film director Stephen Bradley and rugby legend, Tony Ward.

Contrasting with the colourful, creative shop gallery, one part of the 'The Shop That Nearly Wasn't' remained empty, with blank, black canvases on the wall to highlight that more funding and research is needed in order to help improve survival rates for poor prognosis cancers. The campaign was ultimately promoted as a call from cancer survivors to help fund research to make more survivors.

It also had a fundraising element as the public were asked to donate or purchase.

Details of campaign

To keep the media and public engaged and to prolong the campaign, we took a phased PR approach.

PHASE 1

Engaging cancer survivors

We put a call out nationally and regionally to find cancer survivors who were also creators, and when they responded, we invited them to showcase their work in the shop.

The youngest contributor to respond was 10-year-old Lily Burke from Cork, who we partnered with illustrator, Peter Donnelly, to design unique tote bags for the Shop.

This phase created brand awareness for Breakthrough in local media across the country from Cork to Wicklow, Galway, and Donegal.

Creating their stories

Impactful stories and creative assets were developed for each cancer survivor so we could share their journey and promote their products. A 'before and after' photoshoot showcased how far they have come. This photo series was shot by photographer and melanoma survivor Kevin Griffin. Video interviews for screening in the shop and on social media were also created.

Celebrity and Influencer participation

Getting celebrity endorsement was key to extending the reach of the campaign, so we researched and reached out to as many celebrity survivors as possible. The initiative was supported by Michael Flatley; Senator David Norris; author and journalist, Emily Hourican; RTÉ Supergarden winner Grainne Walsh, film and television director Stephen Bradley; award-winning children's book author and illustrator Peter Donnelly; milliner to the stars Sarah McGahon; and rugby legend, Tony Ward; all of whom donated products or lent their talents and time to the initiative.

Creating the Events

To give our audience a further reason to visit the Shop, we developed an exciting events series throughout the week, all hosted by cancer survivors.

The events were free in lieu of donations. They included a talk with Senator David Norris; a writer conversation with author, Emily Hourican and journalist, Aoife Barry of TheJournal.ie; a Six Nations Preview with rugby legend, Tony Ward and broadcaster Matt Cooper; a yoga class; artist talk, flower crown making workshop, children's book reading and more.

Dedicated website

A dedicated website www.theshopthatnearlywasnt.ie was created to promote the campaign, events and to sell products.

PHASE 2

Launching the Campaign

In January, we launched the campaign as the World's First shop fully stocked and staffed by cancer survivors, which attracted not only national but international media attention from Marie Claire magazine and The Irish Post in the UK.

We pitched the cancer survivors' unique stories to the media and set up interviews nationally and regionally. Each interviewee was briefed on key messaging in advance to ensure that Breakthrough Cancer Research was to the fore.

We also created an events schedule press release to pre-promote the events and placed them on Eventbrite and Facebook Events for further exposure.

PHASE 3

A Newsworthy Opening

We overcame several obstacles and pushed for a change of venue, to ensure the Shop opened on World Cancer Day, to capitalise on date relevance and media interest.

We fought hard to attract media interest, which was preoccupied in the run up to the general election.

We also invited Senator David Norris, a well-known public figure and cancer survivor, to officially open the Shop, which attracted further interest.

At the opening, we created a photocall with the cancer survivors in front of the shop, which landed in most national media that day/the following day.

And we invited all national media to attend the opening, which resulted in excellent coverage from The Irish Independent to Joe.ie, LADBible, and RTÉ News to name a few.

Product Sales

The products on sale were promoted in relevant media listings.

Events Series

Events ran in the shop throughout the week, giving people another reason to visit. We also created events with media, including Matt Cooper (Today FM), Emily Hourican (Irish Independent) and Aoife Barry (The Journal), Monika Crowley (Joe.ie).

Social media engagement

There was a huge amount of information to communicate in a short time from the campaign itself, to the cancer survivor stories, shop products, celebrity involvement and daily events, so concise messaging was key. Our team created a social media content plan to ensure messaging was consistent with the PR campaign. A call to action hashtag was created to #makemoresurvivors.

Measurement

The Shop that Nearly Wasn't went national and international! Many media carried the campaign as their main story for World Cancer Day. Key coverage highlights included:

- RTÉ News – all RTÉ Digital channels from 7.30am, Six O Clock and Nine O Clock News Marie Claire UK.
- All the broadsheets on multiple occasions – Irish Times, Irish Independent, Irish Examiner. Across several shows on Newstalk including Pat Kenny, The Hard Shoulder and news bulletins 2FM Jennifer Zamparelli said it was... 'the best name ever!'
- Today FM news reports.
- LADBible posted a video of the shop on their social channels... the post reached 879,546 people, with over 17,000 engagements.
- Joe.ie also created a video which gained 16,000 views.
- Interview with cancer survivors on Virgin Media, The Six O Clock Show.
- Michael Flatley shared the campaign on his social media channels to an engaged international audience of more than 250,000.

Results

The nation spurred into action – they visited the shop, went online, shared the campaign, and donated. The campaign generated:

- 132 pieces of coverage with an AVE of €184,000.
- Total campaign reach 3.18million (TV, radio, print, online) 1.5 million online coverage views.
- Nearly 3,000 social shares of online coverage.

Over the week thousands visited the shop, travelling from all over Dublin and as far as Galway, Kerry, Wexford, Cork, and Northern Ireland.

Engagement on Breakthrough Cancer Research's social media pages increased by 1,200% with more than 52,000 engaging with the campaign. Website visits were up by 297% and calls and enquiries to Breakthrough increased by 125%.

Almost €15,000 was raised in store and online over the week, although fundraising was a secondary objective. The shop is still live online, and purchases are continuing.

And ultimately, Breakthrough Cancer Research reached a new younger engaged audience and it is no longer an unknown charity nationally.

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