

AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN **PUBLIC RELATIONS** **2021**



Best Public Relations Event



Campaign

Tullamore D.E.W. Virtual Snug

Description of Campaign

Once the pandemic hit, the business and marketing landscape changed irrevocably in Ireland. Not one to waste time, Tullamore D.E.W. and Jailbird communications set about working with the assets they had to hand, whiskey, industry experts and technology. From there, the **Tullamore D.E.W. Virtual Snug** was born and became a hugely successful reality.

jail
BIRD

Public Relations Consultant

Jailbird Communications



WILLIAM GRANT & SONS
INDEPENDENT FAMILY DISTILLERS SINCE 1887

Client

William Grant & Sons

Background to the Campaign

Globally, Tullamore D.E.W. Irish Whiskey is ranked number two in the world. However, in Ireland due to a very busy competitor space, it falls further down the ranks. Communications for Tullamore D.E.W. in Ireland is centred around making it relevant to a younger demographic who not only enjoy whiskey but enjoy culture, experiences and fun. Tullamore D.E.W. does not have the same marketing spend as some of the other big drink's brands operating in the whiskey space in Ireland so with that in mind, they look to PR to create as much awareness and noise as possible.

Much of what was planned in 2020 was based on 'in person experiences' where media, influencers and consumers could build a rapport with the brand resulting in Tullamore D.E.W. building awareness and affinity with their target audience. These plans dramatically changed when the pandemic hit Ireland in March. The brand and Jailbird Communications needed to think on their feet to create a new focus for what was to be one of the most challenging years in living memory for brands, businesses and the Irish public.

Statement of Objectives

1. Make Tullamore D.E.W. more relevant to their target audience of 25-35 year old's who love socialising, experiences and culture.
 2. Create more awareness for the brand in the Irish market.
 3. Close the gap between some of the big competitors in the whiskey space and Tullamore D.E.W. by driving affinity for the brand.
 4. Utilise Tullamore D.E.W.'s global activation platform 'The Tully Snug' which is a pop-up experience that takes place in pubs across the globe to promote Tullamore D.E.W. and the legacy of the Irish snug.
 5. Create a fun, engaging experience that participants would be likely to promote through their Social media channels.
 6. Build rapport and beneficial relationships with key influencers and media.
 7. Generate quality PR across the spaces where the target audience consume media i.e Digital and Social media platforms.
 8. Create fame for the brand that competitors will take note of.
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Programme Planning and Strategy

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1. Defining The Audience

Tullamore D.E.W. did not have 'above the line support' in 2020. The brand's main means of communicating with their Irish audience was through Social media and PR. This meant that when planning how to get the message out there around the Virtual Snug campaign, landing on the right participants and channels to spread the brand message in the most effective way possible was crucial.

At the start of 2020 pre lockdown, Jailbird Communications and Tullamore D.E.W. had devised a list of key influencers and content creators who they'd like to collaborate with. This selection was based on the brand's personality along with Jailbird Communications knowledge of the influencer landscape in Ireland.

Jailbird Communications uses analytical tools like SimilarWeb and Sprout to gauge following, reach and engagement. Along with that knowledge and their real time, 'on the ground' experience of working with influencers directly, they made recommendations as to the best collaborators to work with for the Virtual Snug events.

These individuals did not have a huge reach on Social but were selected for that very reason. It's well documented that medium reaching influencers who have 5-10k followers, tend to have a more engaged audience and deliver stronger results for brand campaigns.

See a study from HelloSociety qualifying the above statement. <https://bit.ly/3kjohls>

With that in mind, and recalling the original objectives, the brand and Jailbird Communications decided to focus their attention on five influencers who had solid reach and were adept at creating engaging stories across Instagram. This was important in achieving authentic awareness for the brand.

Tullamore D.E.W. and Jailbird Communication made the decision to road test five virtual events with a varied influencer audience. During this time, outside factors such as the restrictions were extremely changeable. It was important to all concerned that these events remained agile so the brand and Jailbird Communications could react and change plans at very short notice.

The first virtual event participants included culture influencer Eadaoin Fitzmaurice, podcasters and content creators Fionnuala Jay & Brid Browne, journalist, Valerie Loftus, music journalist, Nialler9 and print journalist, Aran Brazil.

2. Creating The Virtual Events

As mentioned previously, Tullamore D.E.W. and Jailbird Communications were limited in the assets they had available to create an engaging experience due to the pandemic restrictions. What they did have to hand was a great whiskey along with some brilliant professionals in the whiskey and entertainment industry who had access to laptops and decent WIFI.

Taking learnings from what worked previously for live Snug activations, Tullamore D.E.W. and Jailbird Communications came up with a format that would suit an 'at home environment'. Meaningful social interactions form a huge part of the brand's identity. The team took this fact into consideration when planning the virtual events. Creating fun social interaction moments through the activation became a cornerstone of the virtual events.

3. Making The Most Of The Creative Idea

Ahead of time, Jailbird Communications sent out a special bespoke invite which outlined the event. It asked the invitee to nominate 2-3 friends or family members to receive a Tullamore D.E.W. Virtual Snug gift box. The brand then sent the influencer a box along with their nominated invitees. The invitees were asked to select an evening that would suit everyone to enjoy a special virtual event filled with whiskey cocktails and entertainment. Needless to say, people were intrigued, and the team enjoyed a 100% RSVP rate!

The invitees would then be contacted by Kevin Pigott, Tullamore D.E.W.'s Global Brand Ambassador, who acted as host for the evening. He sent them on Zoom dial in details and gave them an update on what to expect from the evening. The event ran for about 40 mins in total to keep the atmosphere engaged and upbeat. The evening kicked off with a cocktail making class with the ingredients that were sent to the invitees ahead of time in the special gift box.

By kicking off with a cocktail making class, it meant Kevin could build rapport with the group and learn a little more about them. It also meant that the attendees learned lots about the brand in a very informal fun way thus building on one of the core objectives; building awareness, rapport and affinity with the target audience.

4. Bringing Culture To People's Homes

Once the cocktail class finished up, the attendees had enjoyed a few drinks and interacted with Kevin and their friends on the call. Kevin then introduced them to the entertainment section of the virtual event. Kevin is an accomplished spoken word artist and has lots of material that relates back to times in pubs and fun occasions. Kevin performed a few spoken word pieces and then to finish off the evening he introduced a musician called Dan Elliot who played some well-known singalong tunes associated with pub sessions. This section of the event really built upon the brand's objective to have culture at the core of their activations for consumers.

At this stage, attendees have relaxed and inevitably a singsong would ensue. It would have been easy for the brand to create a straightforward cocktail experience but the brand wanted to go further and create a real pub experience. Relating the activity back to one of the main objectives around making the brand relevant to an Irish audience, adding cultural touches like a pub singsong really brought the experience to life.

The team's aim was to create the Irish pub atmosphere that lots of people miss during lockdown whilst also creating connection moments between friends and family who may be missing one another. Through Tullamore D.E.W. facilitating this enjoyable experience, the brand gets face to face interaction time with people who can deliver the brand message to a wide audience by using Social media to document their experience at the event.

5. Timing Is Everything

Key to the success of this campaign was agility of the team involved. The first event was activated in early April, two weeks after the first lockdown was announced. The brand was well ahead of the competition in terms of using Social media and video technology to create a consumer experience. They leaned in on the fact that these video call platforms do not require a perfect creative execution. The fact that the content was more raw and real made the brand more personable to its target audience.

Tullamore D.E.W. was one of the first brands to host a virtual event and this became news in itself thus giving Jailbird Communications the opportunity to hit the objective of garnering fame for the brand through PR by reaching out to multiple sectors of media including trade, business, consumer and lifestyle with the activation story.

6. Delivering Fame For The Brand

An interesting point to note about this campaign is that the traditional way of 'PR-ing an event' was inverted. The team hosted the events first and received very strong Social coverage on the back of each event and in turn, traditional media and key stakeholders then covered the success of the activity thus delivering on the core objective of achieving fame and great PR for the brand.

Measurement

When reflecting on the overall objectives of the campaign, all objectives were achieved to great success.

In **making Tullamore D.E.W. more relevant to 22-35 year old's**, by the end of the campaign the team hosted events with 9 culturally relevant influencers who achieved great engagement with the brand's target audience. By that cohort of people covering the brand on their own personal channels it meant they endorsed not only the fun activity but also the brand and its key attributes.

Some feedback from participants included:

"Best thing I've seen an Irish brand do in quarantine!"

"The drinks were absolutely banging, you've got 4 lifelong fans now."

"Thank you SO MUCH for last night. It's the most fun we've had in ages and my housemates haven't stopped talking about it, so many messages from people showing interest in it too which is great."

In creating more awareness for the brand in the Irish market, **the reach figures totalled 595,647**. This reach figure was achieved purely through Social media mentions and earned media across traditional outlets.

The team grew its PR footprint massively during this campaign. The activity generated **86 pieces of earned content on Social media**. To add to that, Jailbird Communications landed **8 pieces of earned media covering print and online outlets**.

In terms of being seen as a big brand player within the Irish market, this objective was greatly delivered upon by landing the Tullamore D.E.W. Global Brand Director one of the main feature segments in the **Sunday Business Post**. Here, the director spoke about how the Virtual Snug delivered upon Tullamore D.E.W.'s brand objectives and she also got the opportunity to discuss the brand ambition within the Irish marketplace.

A clear sign that this piece of earned media delivered impact was the fact that days later, the Web Summit got in touch and asked **the brand to host a series of Virtual Snugs with media from all across the globe**. An idea that started off as a reaction to a negative event, the lockdown, delivered hugely positive impact not only from an Irish perspective but globally all through quick thinking and a clever use of a PR strategy.

A snapshot of total figures:

- TOTAL NUMBER OF SESSIONS ACTIVATED: 9
- TOTAL PIECES OF CONTENT GENERATED: 86
- TOTAL REACH OF SESSIONS & COVERAGE: 595,647
- TRADITIONAL EARNED MEDIA: 8 PIECES

PARAGON



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