



2008 Gold Effie Winner

“KCA’s Media Ambush of iPod Launch”

Category: **Non-Profit/Pro-Bono/Public Service**

Brand: **Keep A Child Alive**

Primary Agency: **Anomaly Communications**

Strategic Challenge

40 million people worldwide suffer from AIDS. Every 100 days, 800,000 people die from AIDS. The disease has orphaned 12 million children (source: Keep A Child Alive Research). It is a global pandemic that is devastating communities, families and individuals. Keep a Child Alive (KCA) is a US based charity that is one of many trying to help.

KCA provides anti-retro viral drugs, build treatment centers and provide support for those who suffer from AIDS in Africa and India. 100% of all donations go to their programs. In the past KCA’s ‘marketing’ was similar to many in the category – big name celebrities (such as Alicia Keys) offering pro-bono support – often in the shape of print advertising campaigns – that mirror other bigger spending media friendly campaigns such as RED, ONE or Drop The Debt.

In comparison to other AIDS charities, KCA has a limited financial impact and little relative awareness. Their income – and therefore contribution - is around \$3mm a year and they have only 10,000 monthly donors. They need a dollar a day to save a life but their stature pails in comparison to organizations such as the Global Fund to Fight Aids, which has committed \$8.4billion dollars to support the fight, or UNICEF, which operates in over 100 countries to help prevent infection.

Alongside this cluttered media environment are the realities of a tired consumer. The charity giver tends to be a twenty something, socially aware, creative and college educated. They also tend to be medium and above income (Source: Hall & Partners Consumer Segmentation 2007 Research for RED). However, the sheer proliferation of charities has created charity fatigue.

Giving takes effort and invariably charity begins at home – with a school fundraiser and or a Breast Cancer donation. AIDS sufferers on the other side of the world are a long way away literally and figuratively (source: Hall & Partners Consumer Segmentation 2007 Research for RED).

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Our strategic challenge was therefore huge but simple:

In light of the truths that KCA have little money, the public has charity fatigue and people are inherently selfish – find a way to overcome these and connect with the public in a way that raises money and awareness for KCA’s mission.

Objectives

With as close to zero money as possible:

1. Raise KCA’s profile within the broad mainstream media.
2. Increase the relative number of enquiries to KCA through website contact.
3. Raise money to save lives – a dollar a day saves a life

The Big Idea

"With little money, leverage and activate social and media networks to 'lean into frame' during the launch of the world's first iPhone to raise money, awareness and support for KCA."

With the challenges KCA faced, the key was to exercise an opportunistic approach. To find that moment when KCA could become 'the story'. Furthermore, it was clear that the 24/7 digital networked media allowed for rapid and relevant distribution of information and content. Thus the impending launch of the Apple iPhone was an area where this new digital media landscape would be prevalent. The 'most important technology launch of the decade' (source CNET) provided an opportunity to 'lean into frame' for the benefit of KCA and use that media power to its own advantage. At a time when we are in a world that is more connected than ever – exemplified by a state of the art product to do just that – there was an opportunity to remind people that we all have a responsibility to reach out, connect with and help those who cannot help themselves.

Bringing the Idea to Life

The key principles of executing this idea were speed, activation of networks and providing a continually 'bigger' story for the media.

On Tuesday 26th June 2007, as the first few news items were being run about the impending iPhone launch that coming Friday and the technology website chatter was beginning to increase, KCA placed one guy on a chair with a handmade sign and a KCA t-shirt outside the SOHO Apple Store.

An iconic photo was taken and was then sent, with an announcement that the line had started for the benefit of KCA and that the first iPhone would be auctioned for charity, to an array of specifically chosen media outlets – news wires, tech sites, charity organizations and gossip sites.

While there was a larger desire to make sure as many people as possible saw this idea, it was also important that there was a realization that those who would want to talk about it were a more specific group – the iPhone/tech audience, a marketing-savvy audience, a charity audience and general news media outlets. Therefore they were strategically targeted due to their predisposition to run the story. Sites such as PSFK Trends site, or Contribute charity site or ENGadget were all key to

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providing credibility to the story and being able to place this story into the heart of the digital networks. This was a story that these places would all find relevant – be in within iPhone chatter and debate or within simple ‘news’ stories – this was a moment when KCA could ‘lean into frame’ and make a wide range of media conversations re-direct their focus onto them. Furthermore, KCA created their own media through a FACEBOOK site centered on the iPhone line, which was then distributed to every corner of their Friends list – thus further building the reach of the story. An ability to create a multi-channeled dissemination of the idea was key to building a bigness to the story.

Within 24 hours of the first person being sat there, FOX News had brought their cameras down to do a morning piece from the front of the line. Magazines, websites and news wires also picked up the story – making sure it traveled around the globe as the story appeared in Europe and Asia – and it was featured on mega sites such as the JumboTron in Times Square. As the interest grew, the t-shirts and signage were used to create brand partnerships. KCA offered this space to various brand partners to capitalize on the media interest. Jawbone Bluetooth Headsets, Netflix and Virgin America being primary partners - having their product and logos on literature and part of the auction package for the finale.

Over the next 3 days KCA rotated a group of 4 people every 4 hours at the front of the line. They were there through the night, through the thunderstorms and through the heat wave. They conducted interviews with any media who turned up. They created on the spot donors and ambassadors for the KCA message by providing literature and wristbands to the hundreds of people who walked past who wanted to know what was going on.

The danger was that despite KCA having grabbed the media’s gaze over the 3 days before the launch, that the final act of the opening of the doors and the rush for the product would mean KCA suddenly dropped out of view. This was planned for by enrolling Spike Lee as the KCA Ambassador who would stand at the front for the grand opening. As an iconic creator of powerful films about African Americans and a long-standing supporter of KCA, Lee was an inspired choice. He provided high-profile gravitas to the finale and ensured KCA stood front and centre as the world’s media lens sharpened its focus. Thus, at 6pm on Friday June 29th, the world’s media gaze was on Spike Lee and the KCA team bursting through the doors of the APPLE Store on Spring St, SOHO. As hundreds cheered the first iPhone was purchased and interviews conducted with as many media outlets as possible explained KCA’s mission and directed them to the eBay auction for the phone. Film of the opening was shown around the world as well as privately posted on Youtube and on the KCA website and FACEBOOK page.

The eBay auction was another key media pillar and its success was fuelled by a steady push of the story to the media about the fact that the price was rising. This created more and more interest and by Wednesday the final winning bid came in at \$100,000 (Source: eBay). An outstanding achievement.

For the cost of the iPhone itself and a couple of hundred dollars on handmade signs and tshirts, KCA had managed to dominate the media for a week. They had made this highly anticipated technology launch a force for good. They had saved literally thousands of lives and created a sea of new supporters and an all-time high of raised awareness. The media strategy of ‘leaning into frame’ had been executed perfectly – networks had been activated precisely and highly strategically, so that a small select, unpaid for but critical, media platforms had built the idea to a dramatic finale; keeping it relevant and ultimately providing a remarkable return on such a small investment.

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Communications Touch Points

TV

- Spots
- Branded Content
- Sponsorship
- Product placement

Radio

- Spots
- Merchandising
- Program/content

Print

- Trade/Professional
- Newspaper
- Consumer Magazine
- Print partnership

Direct

- Mail
- Email

PR

Events

Packaging

Product Design

Cinema

Interactive

- Online Ads
- Web site
- Viral video
- Video skins/bugs
- Social Networking sites
- Podcasts
- Gaming
- Mobile Phone
- Other _____

OOH

- Airport
- Transit
- Billboard
- Place Based
- Other Signs

Trade Shows

Sponsorship

Retail Experience

- POP
- Video
- In-Store Merchandizing
- Sales Promotion
- Retailtainment

Guerrilla

- Street Teams
- Tagging
- Wraps
- Buzz Marketing
- Ambient Media
- Sampling/Trial

Consumer Involvement

- WOM
- Consumer Generated
- Viral
- Other

Reach: Local, Regional, National, Multi-National

Total Media Expenditure: Under \$500 Thousand

Results

For a limited budget – in this case \$600 – our objectives and results were:

A. Raise KCA's profile within the broad media.

1. Ongoing agency research throughout the duration showed that the idea generated 20mm impressions across the globe (Source: Agency Research).

These included:

TV

Fox
CNBC
Good Day New York

Global News Websites:

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)
Daily Mirror (UK)
Taipei Times (Taipei)

Websites:

askmerrill.ml.com
chicagotribune.com
cnet news.com
downtownexpress.com

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tuaw.com

Ambient unpaid screens:
Jumbotron in Times Square

B. Increase the relative number of enquiries and approaches to the KCA website.
1. Website hits rose by 50% (Source: Jennifer Singleton: PR Director Keep A Child Alive)

C. Raise money – a dollar a day saves a life
1. Once the iPhone was purchased, the ebay auction began. The bids came in and finally finished at \$100,000. We turned \$600 into \$100,000 in less than a week (Source: eBay).
There were a number of other bonus results – new monthly donors signed up, new volunteers signed up and a greater confidence in the KCA team that they can make a difference, that they have a powerful media story to tell and that the power of leaning into frame can give them a fighting chance in the cluttered marketplace. However, away from these, the hard and fast facts are pretty simple – we raised significant funds on a tiny budget. We raised the profile in the mass media. We increased traffic to the website.

The idea was a testimony to a new way of approaching media as a charity. Of understanding how charities can approach the digital world we now operate in and how smart use of the opportunities and networks available can make a huge difference to a charity's awareness, donations and ultimately save thousands of lives.

Anything else going on that might have helped drive results?
None

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