



PROXIMITY LONDON

CLIENT • RNLI

THE TEAM

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OTHER CONTRIBUTORS

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WHAT IS WONDERFUL ABOUT THIS WORK? • We turned the RNLI from 'least known charity among youth' into 'one of the most talked about online.' With just 12 DM packs, we generated nearly a million views, 8,000 texts and 150 videos across seven countries.

OBJECTIVES • To give youth cause to notice the RNLI, be curious about the values it stands for, identify with its purpose, and begin to believe in the work it does. To make the RNLI relevant to a new generation.

STRATEGY AND TARGETING • Co-creation workshops with young people told us they don't want a passive relationship with charities; they want to share, participate and co-create them. They revealed how misunderstood and voiceless they feel. They believe they're maligned as a "generation of hot-blooded, vicious, knife wielding, ASBO-collecting hooded thugs". They identified the celebrities they admire as YouTube vloggers who speak their minds. We needed to make our cause their platform.

As our older donors want every penny to go to saving lives at sea, we had scarce resources to create our youth campaign. No billboards, no TV ads. We still inspired 11% of British 15 to 20-year-olds to interact with the RNLI and its values: passion, courage, determination and altruism. We saw the opportunity for a brand to believe in them and challenged them to tell us who they really were. The buzz from our subversive unbranded DM swept through social networks beyond the UK.

We selected 12 British vloggers as spokespeople of a generation. How did we reach these virtual celebs? We scoured their YouTube pages, blogs and websites. We couriered our mystery package to one vlogger at a gig. Another at his theatre group. We even bought a belt off eBay to get another's return address! Our unbranded 'mystery packages' challenged them to tell us who they really are. Each package had a different challenge. By personalising copy like never before with details about each vlogger's likes and dislikes, we developed a deep relationship. In turn they electrified subscribers; the buzz swept through their social networks instantly, beyond the UK. We invited them to bring their cameras down to RNLI HQ to find out who we are. Our campaign became a movement as the brand was given into the hands of young people, and shaped and shared by them.

DATABASE • We built our own network, who now act as a conduit and help get our messaging further than any traditional approach.

RESULTS • We identified the UK's top bloggers as a powerful media channel. Their videos sparked 1 million views, 8000 texts and 150 videos, featured twice by YouTube editors and ranked 'most-viewed this month' in 7 countries. We reached 11% of 15–20 year olds with just 12 DM packs and rebranded both the RNLI and our target audience.

JUDGE'S COMMENT:

One of those seminal pieces of work that marks a step shift for direct marketing. The RNLI campaign signals how brands must now revolutionise the way in which they communicate with their audiences. They can no longer just passively push out messages; rather they need to engage through audience interaction and empowerment.

The results were astonishing, successfully motivating a previously uninterested audience to become engaged with the RNLI. This Grand Prix winner truly epitomises the core principle of the DMA Awards: being judged by what others do.

Mike Colling
 Chair of the 2009 DMA Awards Committee