Ex-Smokers Are Unstoppable (Pan-Europe)

Scope of Good Practice

The “Ex-Smokers Are Unstoppable” campaign focuses on the benefits of giving up smoking as it targets an age group well aware of the health risks of tobacco (24 – 35). For the first time, the message is a positive one in that it aims to support a long-term motivation to get rid of one's addiction and stay away from tobacco. The focus is on the new life that opens up to ex-smokers. The “Ex-Smokers Are Unstoppable” campaign was awarded a Gold Euro Effie on September 19, 2012.

The Problem Addressed by the Campaign

Every year, 695 000 Europeans die because of smoking. Smoking continues to be the largest single cause of preventable death and disease in the European Union (EU). Research shows that, on average, 21 percent of European smokers have tried to quit at least once in the past year. However, research also indicates that they are not always successful. Anti-tobacco campaigns are not new but until recently, they focused only on how bad smoking is and how it can negatively impact on health and lifestyles.

Solution

Background Research

Extensive research was used to come up with the strategic and creative concept of the ex-smokers campaign. The Eurobarometer is a survey carried out for the European Commission to map the profile of smokers throughout all 27 EU member states (n=26,751). Respondents from different social and demographic groups were interviewed face-to-face in their mother tongue. Before launching, the Ex-smokers campaign was also pre-tested (n= 300 per country). The evaluation of print, banners, TV-spots and the i-Coach online tool resulted in some small optimizations of the campaign approach.

Strategy

Something magical happens once smokers get rid of their tobacco habit. They don’t just quit smoking. They start doing lots of other things as well. They make new plans, or dig up older ones, they become more active, gain more self-confidence, go out and travel more, and generally feel a lot better about themselves. In addition to that they save money, which aids in the realization of said plans and intentions. Furthermore, the feelings of conquest and independence, the first success that these attempts engender is quite familiar to a large part of the smoking population. Something remarkable happens to people who quit smoking.

Creative

The positive tone used throughout all communication efforts is what makes this anti-tobacco

campaign stand out.

In addition to the motivational message in print, TV commercials, digital banners and search, the campaign offers free practical help and guidelines on how to stop through iCoach.

Created with input from leading scientists, psychologists and communication experts, the iCoach online tool guides smokers through a five-stage process that offers motivation, advice and tips, and sends daily help by email so that they stay on course.

The campaign makes people aware of the multitude of reasons to live the life of an ex-smoker. And when that idea becomes real, we’re there with iCoach to help people on their way to achieve that goal.

Media

The campaign was communicated in print, audio-visual (television and seeding) and online (display ads, banners, search engine, social media) as well as at national and international events.

The campaign launched with print and banners as these channels proved the most manageable budget-wise and provided full European coverage.

Metro (or newspapers with a similar profile) became the print partner, as this free newspaper is handed out on a daily basis in urban areas. Cover wraps and multiple executions highlighted advantages of quitting and, crucially, encouraged the press to dedicate influential column inches to the campaign.

In August 2011, Facebook fans were recruited and their personal stories were used in the autumn phase of the campaign. From mid-September until mid-October, print and digital media were the key media used — cover wraps, print ads, Facebook ads, online performance banners and search.

In addition, two television ads were featured on pan-regional TV channels, Eurosport and Euronews. They were also seeded online with Go Viral and EBuzzing to extend the reach and enlarge the potential for discussion.

Total media impressions give us a reach of 19,354,142 in the specific target age group (25 – 34), total reach across all 27 EU member states was 347,255,730.

Impact

To assess the effectiveness of the campaign, two sources of information were taken into consideration. First, statistics on website visits and subscriptions to iCoach were collected. Secondly, the campaign was post-tested in all 27 EU Member States.

Objective 1: Appreciation of the new approach

More than 50 percent of the smokers who have seen the campaign acknowledge it is telling them new things about giving up smoking. The large majority (67 percent) of the post-test sample was

convinced that this new approach will persuade more people to stop, while an even larger group (80 percent) thinks that this campaign is doing a better job than previous efforts.

Objective 2: Conversation and sharing potential

The post-test indicates positive results with both smokers and non-smokers, as 44 percent and 36 percent respectively say that they talked about the campaign. Moreover, 97 percent of all conversations about the campaign have been positive. On average, 18 percent of the smokers who have seen the campaign have recommended it to someone else.

Objective 3: Effect on attitude and intention to stop

Having seen this campaign, 28 percent of smokers consider quitting smoking. Television and print have proved to be the most effective media in this respect. An average of 20 percent of the smokers claimed that they visited the website after seeing the campaign, which indicates that they actively searched for information.

Objective 4: iCoach registrations

In the period June 15 to October 31, 2011, more than one million unique visitors went to stopsmokingcoach.eu. There were 359,545 visits to the registration page, resulting in a total of 145,491 registrations on iCoach, which means that 40 percent of the visitors actually registered on iCoach.

Anyone who ever smoked knows quitting is a tough job. Advertising can probably only play a limited role, and individual motivation must do the work.

Conclusions and Recommendations

That’s what this campaign set out to do: make people aware of the multitude of reasons to live the life of an ex-smoker. And when that idea lands, we’re there with iCoach to help people achieve that goal.

Results clearly demonstrate that a positive ex-smoker campaign gets more attention than a negative one. Figures also indicate that people recognized this break with the usual communications on the issue, which allowed us to steer clear of avoidance tactics people have developed.

Finally, intentions to stop were raised among our target audience (25 – 34) and were turned into reality through registrations on and use of iCoach. The campaign gave

150,000+ Europeans (more than 1 in 1000 EU smokers) a better chance to turn themselves into ex-smokers and become unstoppable.