

For Canaletto (Germany)

Scope of Good Practice

“ For Canaletto ” created a sense of identification with the historic painting “ Dresden from the Right Bank of the Elbe Below the Augustus Bridge ” among the general public of Dresden and beyond.

The Problem Addressed by the Campaign

The painting “ Dresden from the Right Bank of the Elbe Below the Augustus Bridge ” by Canaletto is the quintessential Dresden picture. Since its creation in 1748, it has characterized the image and perception of Dresden like no other painting. After nearly 200 years in exhibitions, the masterpiece urgently needed a restoration, but public funds were not available.

Background Research

The communication measures had multiple goals:

- To generate awareness of the painting and its restoration.
- To collect donations for the painting ’ s restoration from all people – because every small amount counts.
- To create and strengthen a broad interest in the governmental art collection.

Strategy

Many people believe in the cliché that art is elitist. “ For Canaletto ” specifically avoided this stereotype. The goal was to create a sense of identification with the art piece among the general public of Dresden and beyond and to not only address art lovers. What really mattered was proximity and daily encountering with the painting. The public should regard the picture as a part of Dresden and its history and develop emotions for “ their ” landmark. The PR agency Ketchum Pleon helped all of Dresden and its guests became saviors of Canaletto.

Creative

The target group was addressed by clear, comprehensible and emotional language. This down-to-earth approach distinguished the communication from other art campaigns. The target group consisted of everyone – students, art collectors, tourists and celebrities. The campaign started with prominent individuals, who stood up for Canaletto. The statements of these celebrity advocates were an essential part of the campaign. The campaign created awareness through unusual ways: a vast number of shop owners displayed donation boxes (specifically designed for this purpose) on their shop counters to collect money for the restoration. Other tactics included benefit concerts, visits to the restoration workshop, art projects and individually-designed stamps. Dresden tour guides were briefed to advertise to their audiences. “ For Canaletto ” also involved children and teenagers. A workshop was held for kids and their parents by the management of museum education of the Dresden State Art Collections. Dresden students showed their commitment by designing their personal Canaletto view – in oil as well as electronically. The most beautiful ones were produced as postcards. In self-made hawker ’ s trays, the students sold their creations in the inner city of Dresden.

Media

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<http://www.weforum.org/best-practices/creative-good/canaletto-germany>

Ketchum Pleon communicated about the campaign through print, web, national events and promotion activities. Press releases were sent out during and after campaign events for regional media in Dresden and Saxony. Press and media received updates on the restoration and updates on donations. Media events, press conferences, press broadcasting and background conversations were launched. The donation campaign was tracked on the website fuer-canaletto.de. The main focus was on events and the inclusion of ordinary people like students, tourist guides, etc.

Impact

“ For Canaletto ” has achieved its goal of raising awareness about a seminal work of art. The campaign ’ s success can be viewed anytime now in Dresden: in August 2011 the restored painting arrived back in the art gallery with an exhibition of the same name. The donation campaign by Ketchum Pleon managed to collect over € 128,000 for the reconstruction by raising awareness for Canaletto.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The main concern of this campaign was to save an historical piece of art and to make people aware of their shared power. If everyone just gives a small amount of money or contributes a little bit of time, together big things can be achieved – like the restoration of a city ’ s landmark. A target group does not always consist of the obvious people. We at Ketchum Pleon know that it can often be very effective to change the way communications are approached and present the subject in the right emotional way. This emotionalizing context has been decisive for the success of the Canaletto campaign.