



Category: Best Use of Social Media

Company: Highlight PR

Entry title: #FindingAquabeads

Brief and objectives:

Aquabeads is a global craft brand which allows children aged 6+ years to make artistic creations from kits comprising coloured beads which stick together when sprayed with water.

Under the new ownership of EPOCH Making Toys, the team has worked to reposition Aquabeads as a mainstream craft brand instead of a discounted promotional item. In the last year, our objectives were:

1. Grow social community (KPI: reach 30k total community by 1.6.17) & increase audience reach
2. Drive awareness of new licensed products, in particular Aquabeads Finding Dory sets
3. Drive overall product sales at retail.

Rationale behind campaign, including research and planning:

NPD research showed the craft market grew by 14% in 2015, yet awareness of Aquabeads versus competitors Hama and new-comer Beados was still very low.

We had originally launched official Facebook and Twitter profiles in April 2014, targeting parents with organic content (product info, lifestyle images of Aquabeads creations linked to national days, seasons, 'feel good' wording etc), plus monthly product giveaways. Growth was steady but slow for 2 years.

In summer 2016 we increased activity with the following:

- A monthly digital game for fans to play across multiple platforms
- A Christmas advent calendar
- 10 dedicated 'Aquabeader' bloggers to generate online reviews (regularly updated with a turnover of new bloggers when relevant)
- Integrated PR and social stunt to launch Aquabeads Finding Dory sets
- Organic following on Twitter & Instagram
- Facebook advertising

In January 2017, we launched a PopJam channel to reach the target audience directly.

Strategy and tactics, including the types and variety of social media utilised, creativity and innovation:

Running across Facebook, Twitter & Instagram we created a series of digital games to capture fans' attention with imaginative themes which resonated with the brand/specific products, together with fun, quirky hashtags. These monthly social 'moments' were designed to drive engagement.

Examples included:

- Traditional party games: #PasstheAquabeads, #LuckyPick, #Aquagrams #Aquafish #Aquatreats (Halloween) #AquaScrabble #AquaSpot (Spot the Difference) #OddCreationOut
- Licensed product games: #AquaStars (Guess the Star Wars character as it gradually materialises in the creation process), #CowboysVAliens (Toy Story-themed noughts and crosses), #PrincessWho (Disney Princess guessing game).

We liaised with toy retailers and kids' magazines prior to each game so they take part to amplify reach. Each game ran over 3 days with products as prizes.

#AquabeadsAdvent

In December, we created an advent calendar out of Aquabeads Christmas creations. We used festive content to promote daily product giveaways between 1 to 25 December e.g. all the prizes wrapped and stacked in the shape of a Christmas tree.

Bloggers

We chose 10 parent bloggers who loved craft to review Aquabeads products regularly, and created an 'Aquabeader' badge for their blog.

Twitter and Instagram organic following to target parents who love arts and crafts, or follow competitor brands.

Facebook Advertising focused on recruitment ads to drive community growth.

Popjam repurposed images and simple games as content.

Implementation of tactics:

In July 2016, we created a bigger PR and Social Media stunt to promote the new Finding Dory Aquabeads range in the run up to the launch of Disney's Finding Dory film.

Our #FindingAquabeads stunt was based around a London treasure hunt, with 100 x Dory and Nemo Aquabeads creations placed at iconic landmarks, visible to passers-by (each labelled with a social call to action)

Pre-promotion:

- Notification to fans re treasure hunt (to encourage planning of day trip to London)
- Outreach to listings, parenting & lifestyle media to share treasure hunt info before/during

Day of stunt:

- Photos of the creations in situ with fun verbal clues to help people find them
- Posts to encourage people who found them to tweet a picture using our hashtag #FindingAquabeads for the chance to win a family holiday to Disneyland Paris
- #FindingAquabeads map graphic

- Competitions to guess the locations (to amplify the stunt nationwide) with additional product prizes to win
- Mentions/shares across social channels of key parenting/lifestyle media.

Measurement and evaluation:

1. Total social community grew from 17,000 (June '16) to 37,600 (June '17) thereby smashing the KPI. (YOY increase: 121%)
2. Digital games created monthly spikes in engagement as high as 9.5% on Twitter (March 2017). After sharing 'CowboysVAliens' game on the Smyth's official Twitter feed, the retailer's social media manager commented: "The game was a great success! It was among one of the highest interactions on our UK Twitter page. We had great numbers of interaction, RTs and Favs."
3. % increase in reach YOY:
 - Twitter: 0.7%
 - Facebook: 26.8%
 - Instagram: 78.9%
4. #FindingAquabeads stunt: 2.3k tweets used the hashtag, generating 1.1m reach & 4.8m potential impressions on Twitter (Source: Union Metrics). Engagement increased by 233%. Mentions from Yours, Girtalk & Pink magazines
5. #AquabeadsAdvent: 57k entries, 75.5k engagements, 12% community growth
6. 48 blogger reviews (total estimated views: 38.4k)
7. 1.4k followers on Popjam (after 6 months)
8. Facebook advertising: generated 11k new likes at a cost of £0.55 per like.

Evaluation:

1. This activity helped overall sales growth of 65% YOY (March 2017)
2. Aquabeads became UK's #2 craft brand in December 2016 (Source NPD) with 44% brand recognition amongst mums and children (Source: Client research).
3. 3 additional major licensed ranges now launching in 2017 for Disney & Universal films
4. Our UK Facebook posts/images are now used globally/translated by all international markets (except Japan) as core monthly content
5. Our UK Instagram feed is now global feed (@Aquabeads_official) for all international markets (except Japan).