

The logo for the CIPR Pride Awards 2019 Gold Winner. It features the text "CIPR PRIDE AWARDS 2019" in white on a black background, followed by "GOLD WINNER" in large, multi-colored letters (pink, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple).

Category: Consumer Relations Campaign

Company: JBP Associates

Entry title: VApril - national consumer awareness programme for vaping

Brief and objectives:

JBP was appointed by the UK Vaping Industry Association in 2017 and one of its objectives was to educate its key stakeholders, including smokers as to how best to make the transition from conventional to electronic cigarettes whilst dispelling the misinformation that was being conveyed via small scale research and media reporting in terms of the risks associated with vaping.

The idea, research and planning:

It was very clear that there was a misconception amongst consumers that vaping was at least if not more harmful than smoking, despite the fact that Public Health England had evidenced that it was 95% less harmful than smoking.

Our own research which we commissioned Consumer Intelligence to undertake highlighted that 40% of the smokers interviewed still did not think or did not know that smoking was more harmful than vaping. In addition, it revealed that nearly half did not know or did not think that smoking was more expensive than vaping.

On top of these research insights it was found that there was a lot of scaremongering in the media - from vaping increasing someone's likelihood of having a stroke to increasing blood pressure and acting as a gateway for young people to start smoking – which put vaping in the firing line.

Against this background the idea of the VApril campaign was developed by JBP as a means to educate smokers and give them every support and reassurance when making the switch from smoking to vaping.

As part of the planning process, JBP organised workshops involving marketers from the Association's member companies in order to get their full support for the campaign as well as their ideas.

JBP also created a campaign guide for all participating members to follow to ensure consistency in approach to local marketing communications initiatives and that the same messages were conveyed.

A special VApril planning committee involving representatives from the membership was established to create the strategic plan, discuss ideas and drive forward actions.

JBP led on the plan and fine tuned from feedback from the committee.

Strategy, tactics, creativity and innovation:

The strategic approach was four-fold:

- To create an interactive education experience for smokers looking to break their habits using vaping
- To use compelling stories of existing vapers who had successfully switched to encourage smokers to make the transition
- To recruit a credible face for the campaign who would engage the UK public
- Harness the full marketing communication strength of the network as highlighted above.

Delivery:

JBP deployed the following tactics:

- We recruited TV doctor, Dr Christian Jessen to be the face of the campaign. Dr Jessen is a real advocate of vaping and has questioned the advertising restrictions which means that vaping cannot advertise via social media or mainstream media unless it is outdoor advertising or trade magazines
- Carried out the first ever research into the positive public health, financial and social impact of vaping, creating an angle that smokers are saving a £1bn per year from making the switch
- Created a Switch on to Vaping Plan which provided a four step plan for smokers to make a successful switch to vaping. This Plan was made available as a digital download via the campaign's website which JBP also developed. Printed versions were also made available at members' retail stores across the country. The retail stores were encouraged to run masterclasses using the Plan and smokers could sign up for these via the VApril website
- A marketing communications support programme for members retail stores including local media relations activity and the production of flyers and posters promoting VApril and masterclasses in store
- Some 20 videos were created of smokers turned vapers telling their stories and the benefits – health, social and financial - that they had gained from the switch – these videos were posted on UKVIA's social media channels including twitter, Instagram, and Facebook and shared with its members who posted on their social media channels

- An ongoing social media programme with content being shared with members so that its impact was maximised. In addition to the vaper videos this included advice from UKVIA members, promoting the in-store masterclasses around the country, infographic facts about vaping and invitations to the public to attend the London launch event. We also reshared members' posts promoting their local activities around VApril
- A national launch at the White Space close to Leicester Square station – this is a blank canvas venue which JBP completed branded as VApril for the official media launch and incorporating an exhibition area showcasing the UKVIA members' vaping products.

Measurement and evaluation:

JBP measured the impact of the programme in a number of ways including:

- Media coverage generated
- Smokers engaging with the masterclass events and launch
- Consumers' engagement with the social media campaign
- Smokers awareness of VApril as a campaign and whether it had the desired effect.

Budget and campaign impact:

On a budget of £96k, the following impacts were generated:

- 681 masterclass registrations just via the website (excludes registrations direct to members' retail stores)
- Significant social media engagement with over 36,000 videos of the vaper videos, 1.11m twitters users reached with #VApril and 654,000 post impressions across all social media channels
- 49 pieces of radio coverage and 24 pieces of print/online coverage with a total listenership of 4m and print/online circulation of 259m
- 140 members of the general public attending the national launch in London
- Some 200 plus downloads of the Switch on to Vaping plans from the website
- Independent research conducted by OnePoll showed that one in five smokers had heard of VApril and 72% said that the campaign had influenced them to switch to vaping.