Category: Public Affairs Campaign

Company: Wire and DF Concerts & Events

Entry title: Agent of Change: Galvanising a Nation

Brief and objectives:
To help push for the Agent of Change (AOC) principle to be implemented into policy planning, Wire were asked to come up with a media campaign that would quickly encourage music fans across the country to show their support.

With just two weeks and a limited budget, we had to work quickly and smartly.

The objectives of the campaign were to:

- Engage target media to raise awareness and drive the public to a dedicated page for AOC
- Position King Tut's and Geoff Ellis as a driver of the policy change, along with Mike Grieve (Sub Club) and Andrew Fleming Brown (SWG3)
- Galvanise Scottish music fans to take action by sending an email or letter to their MSP
- Ensure our media relations and influencer tactics complemented the stakeholder relations being carried out by DFC.

Rationale behind campaign, including research and planning:
We met with DF Concerts to understand the situation, what work had already been done and where we could support.

Through years of working with them, we know how passionate Scottish music fans are. We knew they would want to help protect venues from the threat of closure at the hands of developers.

We needed fans to understand what was at stake and, crucially, take action:

- Understand what the Agent of Change policy is and why we needed it in place
• Make it easy for them to lobby their MSPs, an act many were unlikely to have done before.

But with strict timings, we needed to swiftly draft clear communication documents and be strategic in our targeting. A strong but simple launch campaign, that would send ripples through Scotland’s tight-knit music community, was crucial.

**Strategy and tactics, including creativity and innovation:**
As we had to speak to audiences with a passion for music, not planning policy, our comms needed to be succinct and digestible, yet emotive and inspiring if we were going to get them to fully understand and take action.

Our slick approach involved:

• Writing a pledge page, making it easy for people to submit their support
• Issuing media comms with strong imagery and a clear call to action
• Engaging industry leaders to add weight to the campaign
• Targeting key titles, ensuring the CTA and #AgentofChange were included where possible
• Working with relevant influencers to maintain momentum throughout the week.

**Implementation of tactics:**
Our approach had four key stages:

1. Venue owners photocall and press sell in

Within three days, we brought the owners of King Tut’s Wah Wah Hut (Geoff Ellis), SWG3 (Andrew Fleming Brown) and Sub Club (Mike Grieve) – three of the most popular Scottish music venues - together for a photocall.

The striking image of them outside Glasgow City Chambers, arms folded and ready to take on the challenge, would come to represent our whole campaign. We issued it far and wide with our press release and activated a targeted sell-in.

We achieved a mix of key consumer and trade titles, kick-starting our activity.

The story was initially picked up by 15 consumer and trade titles, including:

• Opinion piece from Geoff Ellis in The Herald
• 10-minute Glasgow Live video, watched by over 11k viewers
• Audio featured on Radio Clyde drive-time bulletins
• Music trade titles such as IQ and CMU
2. Influencer engagement

Word of mouth, particularly on social, plays a key role in spreading news amongst Scottish music fans, so we wanted to appeal to movers and shakers in the scene. We reached out to everyone from music blogs and websites, to producers and bookers, who were happy to help – posting straight away and encouraging their followers to pledge their support and lobby their MSPs.

We made sure each post included a link to our pledge page, making the process easier and increasing the pressure. Top influencers included Podcart, The Scottish Alternative Music Awards, Love Music Love Life.

3. Artist support

We had quickly gained momentum through press and influencers, but Scottish musicians would truly amplify our messaging.

Working closely with DF Concerts & Events, we saw Emeli Sande, Tom Walker, Nina Nesbitt, Lewis Capaldi and Amy MacDonald post our pledge page, sharing their own passion for Scotland’s music venues and catapulting our campaign onto the timelines of their combined 2 million+ followers.

4. Follow up comment

One week after our lobbying deadline, Kevin Stewart MSP stood in front of the SSE Hydro and announced that the Scottish government would include the Agent of Change principle in the next revision of its national framework and in its planning policy.

We drafted and issued a comment from Geoff Ellis on behalf of DF Concerts & Events, praising the decision and thanking fans for their unrelenting support. The news, with Geoff’s quote, was picked up by 16 target titles, including IQ Magazine and Music Week.

**Measurement and evaluation:**

Given our time limitations, our KPI was 5 strong media hits across Scottish and music trade titles, as well as 10 influencer tweets.

We smashed these targets, achieving 31 pieces of national and trade coverage, along with 30 strong influencer posts.

Highlights included:

- A total reach of 10M
- National consumer coverage (print and online), including The Herald, The Times, Evening Times and the National
- 86% of online articles included our AOC link
- A Glasgow Live! livestream Facebook interview with Geoff
Radio Clyde covering the news with sound bites from Mike Grieve
Gold-tier trade titles IQ, Music Week and CMU covering the news
Influencer coverage including; Love Music Love Life, SAMAs, Claire White and Podcart with a combined following of over 750,000.

Most importantly, we helped achieve the ultimate goal of changing important planning policies. This means Scottish music venues, from grassroots to stadiums, are protected from heavy fines or even closure due to new development.

Not bad for two week’s work.

**Budget and cost effectiveness:**
Given the last-minute nature of this campaign, we had activation budget only for a photographer (£250) and a fee of £3,000. This meant limited time, which we used smartly via a highly targeted campaign.

The overwhelming wave of support came from a simple photocall idea, goodwill from our strong influencer network, and a lot of passionate music fans who quickly understood the message and took action.