



Category: Best Use of Digital

Company: One Black Bear

Entry title: St Basils - Donate Your Homepage

Brief and objectives:

St Basils, the West Midlands based youth homelessness charity, is always looking for original ways to up its online presence and, in September 2016, One Black Bear went to them with a real game changer; a campaign which proposed a temporary takeover of the homepages of Birmingham businesses.

The objectives were:

- To increase awareness of St Basils
- To get five businesses to sign up to donate their homepages
- To get the Birmingham Mail involved
- To double traffic to St Basils' website during the takeover period.

Rationale behind campaign, including research and planning:

One Black Bear, having worked with St Basils for a number of years (pro bono), developing its branding and its appearance, understands the charity and its struggles with awareness.

The charity does not have the operational budgets to do large scale awareness campaigns.

They needed a low/no-cost solution to drive traffic to the St Basils website from where they can increase understanding and awareness of youth homelessness in the West Midlands.

One Black Bear, having decided that a homepage takeover would be a smart, unique and measurable approach to take, researched target businesses within the West Midlands to take advantage of their existing web traffic to increase that of St Basils.

The date of the 24-hour take over was chosen to be the nearest working day to St Basils' anniversary.

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

The campaign, which placed a temporary splash page over participant companies' homepage, gave visitors the option to carry on viewing their intended domain or be diverted and learn about St Basils. By donating their web space for a day, these companies were helping young people find their own place in society.

Media Relations: One Black Bear secured buy in and support from Birmingham Mail, who as well as covering the campaign editorially, also donated their own homepage.

Business Audience: The companies taking part covered a broad spectrum of business sectors and included: Argent LLP, BHSF, Birmingham Civic Society, BPN Architects, Dixons, Fira, IDEX Consulting, Paradise Circus Limited Partnership, Shire Insurance, The Space Studio, Birmingham Mail and Tuckers Solicitors.

Digital content: A temporary splash page to be placed over participant companies' homepage, using a strong colour palette, simple messaging and a direct call to action to drive click-throughs and, ultimately, awareness.

Implementation of tactics:

Prior to the 24-hour take over One Black Bear researched and contacted a number of West Midlands businesses, getting the support of 13 for the inaugural St Basils' homepage takeover.

The temporary splash page was designed using "St Basils' red", a colour not only synonymous with the charity but also rarely found on corporate websites which as a result had greater impact. Combined with simple messaging and a strong call to action, the splash page was created with the sole purpose of generating click-throughs.

Some businesses were unable to offer a homepage takeover for various reasons, so One Black Bear offered tailored solutions, such as homepage banners, as an alternative way of showing support.

A packaged file of code was provided to all participating businesses prior to the take over which their in-house / web agencies installed to the website.

On the day itself Birmingham Mail published a story promoting the homepage takeover generating strong coverage for all involved.

Measurement and evaluation:

One Black Bear exceeded its objective to double traffic to the St Basils' website during the takeover period, seeing an almost 300% increase compared to the average daily sessions.

One Black Bear successfully got Birmingham Mail involved, not only generating coverage for the homepage takeover campaign, but the regional title also donated its own homepage which resulted in a boost to St Basils' traffic, with Birmingham Mail the top referrer during the campaign.

Twelve businesses signed up to donate their homepages for St Basils, exceeding the original target of five. This will have increased awareness of St Basils with a broad range of consumers and professionals. This is reflected in St Basils' site traffic which, in the month following, saw a 17% increase following the 24-hour takeover.

Although this was an awareness campaign, fundraising was a pleasant side-effect with St Basils' donation page receiving a 200% increase in traffic during the campaign period.

Budget and cost effectiveness:

There was no budget, One Black Bear donated pro bono professional time valued at over £4,500, as well as its own homepage, to St Basils for this campaign.

The time was split between media liaison with Birmingham Mail, recruiting the participating businesses, as well as the design and implementation of the temporary splash page.

The campaign was a great success with not only an increased number of sessions during the takeover but also a prolonged boost to site traffic as a legacy of the campaign.

Following the effectiveness of the campaign and positive anecdotal feedback, St Basils is now planning a repeat event for 2017, again with the aim of increased awareness.