

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: Integrated Campaign

Company: Playtime PR and Asmodee UK

Entry title: Adventures in Storytelling with Rory's Story Cubes

Brief and objectives:

To create a truly integrated campaign to raise awareness of Story Cubes with UK parents. Elements of tangible gameplay should be incorporated into the campaign, along with independent expert authority into the benefits of using Story Cubes to enhance parents' and kids' storytelling powers. The campaign should intrinsically link Story Cubes to storytelling.

The idea, research and planning:

A core objective of the campaign was to drive awareness of Story Cubes amongst a family audience while incorporating some tangible element of gameplay. The campaign was created with these things in mind – to develop an integrated approach featuring multiple layers to meet the objectives.

It was core to develop an approach that would support a robust media relations aspect for awareness while including visual and 'hands on' elements of gameplay.

We communicated with UK libraries in Autumn 2018 to establish the feasibility of working with together, supporting them with storytelling resources to get the Cubes into the hands of one of our core audience groups.

We needed someone with esteem to front the campaign, to support the awareness objective while also giving us opportunity to produce content to meet the gameplaying objective.

We brokered a partnership with renowned author and former Children's Laureate, Michael Rosen to be our key spokesperson for media relations, to support and bring expert credibility to our library relations and also to produce storytelling content using Story Cubes for his own YouTube channel of over 309k subscribers.

Strategy, tactics, creativity and innovation:

To underpin the awareness aspect and to give a narrative for Michael to discuss as part of the media relations strategy, we conducted research amongst 1,000 parents and their children to explore their storytelling prowess and comfort in telling stories off the cuff. Parents admitted to a stifled imagination and struggling to create stories from scratch. We

also explored the types of stories that were shared at home and revealed a decline in awareness/understanding of 'traditional' fairytales.

These results gave us the story cues for our media relations as well as insights for the development of – and the 'why' factor for – the video content with Michael.

We chose to launch the campaign during National Storytelling Week to harness media interest and also to mobilise a series of libraries we had been communicating with ahead of the campaign.

We worked closely with Michael's production team to develop the content – being keen not to 'over-direct' so that resulting content would be fitting for Michael's audience and in line with the typical nature of his channel, to maximise engagement in the messages being shared through the videos.

Delivery:

Working specifically with the Heads of Children's Departments at UK libraries, we provided Story Cubes to be used during National Storytelling Week, plus branded flyers for their social channels and posters to encourage library footfall.

More than 35 libraries ran these storytelling events and activities – sharing some wonderful stories inspired by Story Cubes on their social media channels and using specially-created printed collateral to promote the campaign.

The results of our consumer research supported a news generation campaign – having identified that one in five parents find it impossible to tell stories off the top of their heads, with 17% of parents claiming modern life gets in the way of story time.

Inevitably, 83% of children said they would like to spend MORE time with their parents being told stories.

We undertook a far-reaching media relations campaign to share the story during Storytelling Week including quotes from Michael and our client, Asmodee.

Working within limited time access to Michael Rosen, we held a media morning where he undertook 20+ radio interviews with stations including talkRadio, BBC Radio London and BBC Radio Scotland. Some presenters were challenged to create with their own stories on air while interviewing with Michael.

Having worked closely with Michael's production team, Michael's 'trailer' video for the Story Cubes series on his YouTube channel launched on World Book Day. Two further episodes appearing during April, giving the campaign sustained awareness, a consistent link to storytelling (with Michael revealing his own Story Cubes fuelled story) and providing opportunity for viewers to see how the Cubes could be used to support their own storytelling adventures.

Conscious of the volume of campaigns that centre on the reading 'lack' in UK children, we were keen not to wade in on those messages. It's parents that can prompt storytime at home so, we wanted the focus and discussion to be centred firmly on parents – recognising that

tapping into imagination can be more challenging as we 'grow up', as well as the time-poor nature and tiredness of many working parents. Story Cubes are the tools to prompt the imagination.

As a renowned author, of course Michael Rosen can tell a story but, through the radio interviews and videos, we were able to demonstrate the building blocks for storytelling to parents, and also that stories don't have to make sense for them to be enjoyed.

Measurement and evaluation:

Official storytelling events at 35+ libraries (plus connected schools in some areas) following relationship-building with Children's and Development Leads at local councils – distributing 200+ Story Cubes to support the events – landing social posts around the events AND a series of new stories created and shared by children using Story Cubes during Storytelling Week.

Michael Rosen's YouTube series, introducing the gameplay and revealing Michael's own Story Cubes story, has to date been viewed more than 36,000 times, achieving a 98% approval rating on YouTube. Asmodee UK has also received requests to use the content from their global teams and retail following the success of the campaign.

The news story generated a reach of over 7.8 million via 30+ pieces of coverage including Huffington Post, The Sun, Daily Mirror, First News, Daily Star, BBC Radio Scotland, BBC Radio London and talkRADIO.

Budget and campaign impact:

Budget: £20k.

The campaign successfully raised awareness of Story Cubes with the client seeing a 607% comparative increase in engagement on their Facebook page in the weeks post campaign launch.