

Excellence Awards - 2021 Entry
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Entry ID: 9167

Third Party Authorization

Are you entering on behalf of, or in association with, any third party?: No

Basic Information

Category: 14. Arts, Culture, Sport or Entertainment Campaign

Entry Information

Entrant company name: L.G. Publicity

Client name (for joint entries only):

L.G. Publicity, GMCA Culture, Badger & Combes, Modern English

Entry title:

United We Stream Greater Manchester

Entry

Brief, objectives and budget:

United We Stream (UWS) was a new, live-streaming fundraising platform, showcasing diverse mancanian culture, music and arts.

The project was instigated in swift response to the first UK Lockdown in March 2020. The first stream was on April 3rd, and the last on New Years' Eve.

Objectives:

(a) Raise money through online donations to support the region's struggling night time economy, cultural sector and creative freelancers, who were unable to sustain a living or operate businesses during the pandemic.

(b) Combine renowned and breakthrough cultural content to create unique live-streamed events.

(c) Encourage residents to follow PHE guidance and the 'Stay Home' message.

(d) Combat feelings of isolation, following a decline in the region's mental health due to Coronavirus restrictions.

The brief remained the same throughout the year - UWS was free to watch, but donations encouraged through all communications.

The core team of six (who managed the project remotely throughout 2020 alongside their full-time day jobs) produced diverse original shows using the goodwill of artists, championed talented performers/local cultural events, and raised funds for seriously struggling cultural and charity organisations.

Funding came from GMCA, who supported production costs for the project allowing all money raised to go to the cultural organisations, businesses and charities who needed it most.

There was no pre-planned budget for UWS as the project started from cold. All artists performed for free, and The Met gave UWS use of the venue as a studio.

Corporate sponsorships and in-kind partnerships were a major factor in the success of UWS, and these equated to approximately £350k in value.

The idea, research and planning:

The United We Stream model was originally pioneered in Berlin by their Night Tsar. The Manchester team worked round the clock to be the second city worldwide to launch the concept.

After the concept was approved by the Greater Manchester Mayor the team worked tirelessly to prepare for the first stream, risk assessing that all activity could be delivered safely, in a COVID-secure compliant way. The research involved approaching/booking artists, performers and DJs, developing tech capabilities and a communications plan.

Planning involved securing partnerships with Manchester Evening News, The Met, Unity Radio, Manchester Arena and many more public/private sector partners.

Season one started with a series of eclectic live events eg: club nights with Homoelectric and Funkademia, cooking with chef Gary Usher, live Art Battle with artists competing in countdown rounds from their own homes, and comedy night with renowned comedian, Jon Richardson.

Poets performed differently, DJs entertained with graffiti artists and photographers had their work streamed to audiences they would never have reached before.

Strategy, creativity and innovation:

UWS strategy was to empower artists and curators to achieve their creative potential, reach new audiences all over the world, and develop their practice in the digital sphere.

The team were consistently creative and innovative with their programming. They produced a stream to raise awareness of unsafe cladding, three day Manchester Pride including virtual parade and an HIV remembrance vigil, and streams showcasing some of

the best cultural organisations in Greater Manchester: Contact Theatre, Brighter Sounds, Manchester Jazz Festival and Night & Day.

Headstock Festival was a live stream headlined by New Order, to raise awareness in male suicide, on the 30th anniversary of the death of Joy Division's lead singer - Ian Curtis.

The team produced a special commemorative show to mark the third anniversary of the Manchester Arena attack, with socially distant performance from the Manchester Survivors Choir, and DJ set from Spice Girl, Melanie C.

Local DJs and dancers from Wigan collaborated with UWS for a unique Boxing Day Fancy Dress event to capture the spirit of their annual 42-year long tradition.

For Hacienda NYE 24-Hour Party, UWS cross-posted to 76 global partners, accumulating an astonishing four million views. An innovative concept 'The Virtual Hacienda' - a virtual reality replica of the legendary club, designed by the club's architect and using the latest digital technology, was also showcased.

Delivery/implementation of tactics:

The small UWS social media team worked relentlessly across all platforms during each live event: giving the overarching sense that people were watching 'together', by sharing the #StayHome message, interacting with viewers, creating conversations and encouraging donations.

Streams broadcasted from the UWS website and through their Twitter, Facebook, Twitch and YouTube accounts. Twitch and Zoom rooms were created for people to enjoy smaller 'VIP' group shared experiences.

The team constantly pushed creative boundaries to find innovate ways to entertain and engage their audience.

Measurement, evaluation and impact:

From the launch show on April 3rd to the finale on New Years' Eve, UWS produced 300 hours of live content, amassed 20 million views, provided a platform for more than 400 artists and cultural organisations, and raised an incredible £583,000.

From this total they issued 130 hardship grants between £500 - £10,000 for local hospitality venues and creative freelancers to stay afloat during the pandemic, and helped 30 charities including Nordoff Robbins Music Therapy and the GM Mayor's Charity, supporting rough sleepers.

The final Hacienda show on NYE raised £115,000 alone, trended at number two in the UK on Twitter with an extraordinary global audience of four million views over the 24 hours.

UWS had a very positive impact on the mental health of their viewers - the streams relieved the monotony of lockdown and reduced feelings of isolation. UWS also helped improve the mental health of over 400 artists and contributors, who expressed joy and relief at being able to create and perform.

The whole project beautifully demonstrates how well the UWS team worked together (remotely) to entertain and connect with audiences. UWS helped to reduce feelings of social isolation and the spread of the virus through promotion of the #stayhome message.

The impact of UWS, bringing people together, was illustrated in the thousands of messages from the UWS audience who said how important UWS was in feeling connected to their local music and culture throughout the pandemic.

UWS provided moments of joy that lifted peoples' spirits and reminded them of better times.

Live streaming has often been considered as poor substitute for the 'real thing', but UWS cracked the code of creating memorable, interactive cultural streams that were curated by, and featured, local artists and organisations, and enjoyed globally by millions.

Supporting Information

Additional supporting information (images, artwork, clippings and other media):

Provided

Campaign image (if entering individual/team awards, upload headshot/team photo here):

Provided

Company logo:

Provided

Please write a 30 word entry summary in the third person:

United We Stream Greater Manchester was a trailblazing fundraising project that produced and live-streamed diverse music, artistic and cultural content, and raised £583,000 for good causes.
