

Excellence Awards - 2021 Entry
85 Tottenham Court Road
London. W1T 4TQ
020 7631 6900

Entry ID: 9286

Third Party Authorization

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

Basic Information

Category: 07. Not-for-Profit Campaign

Entry Information

Entrant company name: Dwr Cymru Welsh Water

Entry title:

Single Use Plastics

Entry

Brief, objectives and budget:

At Welsh Water we have long argued that wet wipes containing plastic pose a significant problem for the company and the wider environment, we tackle around 20,000 blockages a year, 60% of them caused by wet wipes containing plastic, costing around £5 million, which could otherwise go to improve services or reduce customer bills.

We support the Welsh Government's aim to move to a circular economy to ensure that we do not use more than our fair share of the World's resources. Reducing the consumption of single use items aligns with this aim to create a litter free Wales.

On 30 July 2020, the Welsh Government launched the 'Reducing Single Use Plastics in Wales' consultation. This was a great opportunity to raise awareness of the problems associated with the use of wet wipes containing plastic whilst encouraging customers to complete the consultation and request the introduction of wet wipes on to the proposed ban list of items.

Campaign objectives:

To raise awareness of the problems associated with wet wipes containing plastic

To encourage colleagues, customers, partners and stakeholders to take part in the consultation

To show our support and encourage customers to show support for the outright ban on wet wipes containing plastic

The campaign budget was £16,000 including film production, creative and production of social content, research, Influencer fees and time.

The idea, research and planning:

Wales has a long history of leading on big policy changes like Organ Donation decisions and the more recent plastic bag levies. With earlier studies showing that a large proportion of litter collected from Wales' beaches and coasts was made up of plastic items, it's clear that this was a great time to tackle a subject that not only has a huge impact on the services we provide but also for every aspect of the environment in Wales.

Our strategy centred around two key strands which formed the bedrock of the campaign; the first was the commissioning of research through YouGov and the second was the commissioning of a film to be used throughout the campaign.

The result was an integrated campaign run from the in-house communications team.

Strategy, creativity and innovation:

We commissioned research which indicated that more than four-fifths of the public would support a ban on wet wipes containing plastic, the main cause of catastrophic sewer blockages likely to flood homes. A further 94% of respondents thought companies should be making wet wipes without plastic in them.

Further research results are as follows:

64% people surveyed did know that wet wipes contained plastic

26% of people surveyed used wet wipes

92% of people disagreed that wet wipes could be safely flushed down the toilet

92% also agreed you should avoid flushing wipes

60% of people using them believed that they should reduce the number flushed in the toilet

Engaging the use of a prominent film director, Chris Thomas, the film aimed to follow the story of one of pollution technicians, Lisa Elworthy, as she goes about her day. Lisa has a great story to tell and her passion for safeguarding the water and her environment is admirable. We were able to build a story around the importance water has in Lisa's life, linking the role she has through her work in the waste/pollution team together with her hobby as an open water 'wild' swimmer. Lisa tells the story of plastics, how they litter our environment and harm our wildlife, damaging future generations. This emotive story perfectly captures the link between wet wipes and the longer-term damage of plastics to the water and environment, a step change in the way we have approached film making and linking the role we play with significant legislative changes.

Delivery/implementation of tactics:

The results of the research provided some compelling statistics. On the 23rd of

September we launched with press releases to all media outlets throughout Wales, showing our support for the consultation and urging people to have their say. The release was accompanied by a media pack including a film led by Steve Wilson, MD of Waste Water, Business Customers & Energy who outlined the problems we encounter as a business, Lisa's film and some social media content. A thought leadership piece from Steve outlining the challenges posed by wipes and positioning Welsh Water as leading the charge on the banning of wipes containing plastic.

Critical to the success of the campaign was to inform but also to encourage support from stakeholders throughout Wales. 150 Stakeholders were engaged with and provided with toolkits and several virtual meetings held to discuss the consultation and urge them to take part.

We used organic social to serve out the film together with some smaller static graphics and animations. In order to help share our message we engaged with industry respected partners and influencers help us share the messages on their own channels.

Leaflets were inserted in to 32,000 planned customer letters from both the waste and community schemes throughout October.

Launching internally first we provided updates on our own intranet pages 'Source', through Yammer, our internal newsletter 'Tonic' and released company-wide emails to encourage participation.

Measurement, evaluation and impact:

Completed Welsh Government consultations rose from 1,900 before the campaign to 3,500 on completion

3,500 colleagues informed

1319 unique users to source pages internally

41,064 visits to the web landing page

150 stakeholders engaged with

Film shown to over 200 people at 2 colleague events

53,833 people reached through Facebook, Instagram and Twitter

18,979 views of the film

1986 reactions, comments/shares

5,150 video views on LinkedIn

32 highly relevant influencers approached, 18 engaged with

A potential follower reach of up to 50,212

12 pieces of coverage, including 1 live radio interview and 1 piece of TV coverage on BBC wales

Estimated reach for print and web PR is 410,006

Mention of DCWW in the Senedd (Wales Assembly) by Janet Finch-Saunders who shared our concerns about the problems caused by wipes containing plastic and our call for them to be included in the single use plastic directive.

Sparked a debate: Members legislative proposal for a Deposit Return Scheme And Waste Reduction Bill – Wednesday, November 25.

Supporting Information

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:

Tackling blockages caused by wet wipes containing plastic is a constant struggle for Welsh Water, this campaign supports the Welsh Government's consultation to reduce Single Use Plastics in Wales.
