

Competition: 2010 UFI Marketing Award
Category Entry for: Best Marketing Activity of the Year
Company: Media 10 Ventures Ltd
Show: Ideal Home Show 2010
Dates/ Venue: 20th March – 5th April, Earls Court, London



BACKGROUND

Media 10's acquisition of the Ideal Home Show, Britain's best loved consumer home event, in September 2009 was one of the biggest challenges in the UK exhibition industry. Against a backdrop of an unstable housing market and first time buyers increasingly affected by the economic downturn, the Ideal Home Show was in a permanent state of decline with falling visitor and exhibitor numbers, dissatisfied customers and an outdated show format.

TARGET AUDIENCE

ABC1 background, 61% female, 39% male, 25-44 years of age, over 50s market, predominantly from London and the South East but also day trippers from around the UK, married or living with a partner, own or have a mortgaged flat or house. Seeks inspiration and ideas, and motivated by a good day out.

OBJECTIVES

The challenge was to breathe a new lease of life into the historic brand within a very short space of time.

- Attract 250,000 visitors across the new 17-day show format
- To deliver visitors within the target demographic
- Rejuvenate the show's image and increase clarity of product and pride in the brand
- Ensure greater access to and effective targeting of the database inherited from the show's previous owners
- Deliver a cost-effective marketing campaign and drive down the CPV (cost per visitor)
- To increase PR coverage/ positive media mentions and attract more journalists to the event
- To increase the volume of visitors to the show website www.idealhomeshow.co.uk
- Turn a £3.2 million a year loss making show into a profit making venture

ACTIONS

Last year, the marketing campaign confused customers with the show proposition deterring many potential visitors. The priority for Media 10, this year, was to make the brand the hero and convey this message to the target audience. We did this by developing new creative with greater cut through, putting the show's name/ logo at the forefront, celebrity endorsements (making the public feel that the show was now in the hands of people they could 'trust'), and bringing back the 'great day out' and 'fun' elements. We also marketed each show section, Ideal Interiors, Ideal Home Improvements and so on to ensure potential visitors would know there was something at the show for them.

Attracting visitors from the core geographic regions of London and the South East was crucial to the success of the campaign, especially the 2 hour drive belt. Highlights from the campaign to attract this core audience included:

- High profile TV campaign for the first time in 2 years, ran for 2 weeks on regional ITV1 and reached 34% of ABC adults at 2 OTS
- 2 week radio advertising campaign with over 530 spots across LBC and Heart stations in London and South East, achieving 39% cover ABC1 adults at 5 OTH
- Heavyweight tube campaign to achieve 92% coverage of underground users, representing 31% of London residents
- Bus back advertising on 1,000 vehicles in the outer zone

Building new partnerships with high profile brands such as Tesco Clubcard and Ticketmaster helped to increase the show's exposure to a much wider audience. A promotion with the London Evening Standard, including a supplement during the show, helped drive the daily number of unique visits to www.idealhomeshow.co.uk to a record 47,415.

Integral to the marketing strategy was the need to communicate effectively to our loyal audience base. But first, we had to conduct an effective data-cleaning exercise on the lists inherited from the show's previous owner. This resulted in the

creation of a reliable 400,000 strong e-marketing list (segmented into bookers, non-bookers and free ticket holders) and a white mail list of over 200,000 addresses. From this, we sent out regular e-newsletters from December until the end of the show and targeted a white mail campaign to 120,000 previous visitors (which did not happen in 2009).

A new simpler, more attractive website was created. Using a new platform with a custom-made CMS, it gave us greater flexibility to update content on a daily basis to keep information relevant and fresh, allowing us to engage with our visitors pre-show and help them plan their visit in advance. The website included comprehensive timetables of show features, stunning virtual floor plans, time-delay videos and regular show news.

To maximise the potential of social networking sites, we developed an in-house bespoke 'AutoTweet' system to automatically tweet show news and events, driving a five-fold increase in followers by show end as well as creating a dedicated fan page on Facebook.

To help combat the negative connotations associated with the show, we employed a new high profile PR agency, Stuart Higgins Communications to target national, broadcast, regional, and consumer channels. We worked with the ABF the Soldiers' Charity in a high profile 'Ideal Homes for Heroes' campaign raising over £100,000 for returning war heroes and generating a huge amount of press coverage. The highlight of the campaign was a highly successful 'Troops Day, in which military personnel were invited to the show along with a military marching band to celebrate the campaign with a street party in the show home village.

Savvy media buying, a more targeted mix, reciprocal marketing activities, and ticket offers with a broad range of partners enabled us to deliver an effective marketing campaign at much lower costs, reducing the marketing budget by half from £2.1 million in 2009 to £1 million in 2010.

RESULTS

This year's Ideal Home Show, the first time the show has changed hands in just over 100 years, exceeded all expectations and achieved record breaking results:

- The show attracted 250,000 visitors, an increase of almost 100,000 on previous year (with 8 fewer days). That's an incredible 57% increase in visitor numbers!
- Opening weekend welcomed 43,000 visitors through its door, almost a five-fold increase on 2009
- 40% of visitors were new audiences to the show, compared to 22% in 2009
- Attracted an affluent audience: 88% ABC1 (of which 63% is AB)
- The 2010 event turned a profit in Year 1 under the new management of Media 10
- The show broke the all time record for advanced tickets sold through the Box Office (127,025) and doubled ticket revenue y-o-y
- Redressed the balance between Paid v Free attendance from only 48% paid visitors in 2009 to 60% in 2010
- Reduced CPV by 68% from £13.45 in 2009 to just £4.26 in 2010
- Visitor satisfaction levels rose from 3.2 out of 5 in 2009 to 4.1 out of 5 this year¹
- More visitors stayed longer at the show; 91% stayed 3 hours or over compared to 59% in 2009
- The Ideal Home Show website www.idealhomeshow.co.uk achieved a record 1 million visits over the campaign
- A tenfold increase in ECRM recipients
- Increase press coverage by over 50% from 311 to 650 pieces
- Attracted over 2,300 journalists to the show, an increase of over 1,000 from 2009

Against the odds, Media 10 has taken a brand that was on its knees and turned it, arguably, into the **biggest** success story in recent exhibition history and a worthy entry for the accolade of 'Best Marketing Activity of the Year' in the 2010 UFI Marketing Award.

To view the event's show reels, interactive floor plans, images and examples of the marketing collateral, [click here](#) or visit www.media10awards.com

¹ Vivid Interface conducted interviews at Ideal Home Show with nearly 2,000 visitors