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1. Project Title: We Can Recycle More

2. Category: Environment

3. Sub Category: N/A

4. Client Company: Tower Hamlets Council

5. Design Consultants: 999 London

6. Current Date: October 2008

7. One of 17 different media comms as part of the borough wide campaign



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Tower Hamlets' recycling rate was the lowest of any London Borough and well below the national average. We needed to ensure that a clearly demonstrable step change improvement had to be evident as a result of our campaign. We achieved this through our groundbreaking 'We Can Recycle More' campaign which aimed to improve Tower Hamlets' yearly residential recycling rate from 12.89% to 19% by March 09. **This yearly target was exceeded at 19.51%, and the cumulative total for the campaign period of October 08 to March 09 reached an impressive 21.53%.**

The Council commissioned us to be the strategic, creative brain for this campaign involving every part of the Council and all of its key partners. Our success has attracted considerable attention from Government, other authorities across the UK and the media.

Our challenge was significant given the limited campaign budget available and the complexities of the audience. Tower Hamlets has a multi-cultural community with a large Bangladeshi Muslim population. It also has one of the highest levels of high rise dwellings in London housing some of the most deprived communities in the UK, while the development of Canary Wharf introduced a wealthy population to the Borough. A huge challenge faced us, all parts of the community had to feel empowered to take part with the aim of achieving a sense of belonging and community strength through participation. Our solution – to create a distinctive, recognisable borough-wide campaign that would motivate residents to get involved and improve their recycling habits.

Key achievements

- March 2009 – the highest recorded recycling rate – **24.89%**.
- Monthly figures show that in only six months **residents recycled on average 5.4% more.**
- **Government target of 19% exceeded.** Cumulative total for campaign period 21.53%.

285 Words

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

Outline of project brief

The campaign to greatly increase domestic recycling needed to be simple, energised, eye-catching and involving. While it needed to be authoritative it had to do so without hectoring and without appearing overly municipal. We were asked to **create an integrated mix of through-the-line media** from freesite posters to internal communications.

Description and overview of market

- **Target all residents** but in particular those segmented by housing typology, age, gender, belief and race. Community groups. All council staff. Stakeholders/partners, schools and businesses
- **Work closely with complex stakeholder framework.** Council identity and partner organisation logo's had to sit alongside the Campaign Logo.
- **Accessibility.** The creative executions and strapline had to take account of accessibility guidelines and show that all applications worked in Bengali translation.
- We also **engaged the Muslim Women's Collective** who were taking on board the need to recycle.
- **A distinctive 'step change' campaign** to positively raise awareness of the importance of recycling and educate the local community on how to use the borough's recycling services.



PROJECT OVERVIEW

Project launch date

The campaign rolled out borough-wide in October 2008. It's set to continue with a new target of 26% to be reached from April 2009 to March 2010.

Size of design budget

£22,600

Campaign concept and supply of design assets for rollout across agreed media, which included a three day borough-wide photoshoot. Tower Hamlets Council were responsible for the print and media buying throughout.

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

Outline of design solution

We started by investigating why recycling rates were so low. It became evident that residents' recycling issues ranged widely. It was clear to us that in order to get people to recycle more, we had to tackle the issues face on and bring them to the fore within the campaign messages.

Our research established that there were already pockets of people actively recycling within the borough. We visited local community projects to identify these real life recycling champions in a bid to get them to rally their fellow residents to recycle more.

"This campaign is about bringing recycling back to the community so people can feel things are being done for them and with them rather than to them." Fiona Heyland, Tower Hamlets' Head of Recycling.

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

Outline of design solution

- **We created a campaign strapline** – the ‘We Can’ message was of key importance, being sufficiently flexible and capable of working across all media. Derived from the Tower Hamlets logo this reinforced the support of the council behind the campaign.
- **We showcased 17 recycling champions** as the face and voice of the campaign, adding gravitas and relevance for both council staff and residents.
- We developed a **flexible campaign framework** supplying assets and a **brand manual and toolkit** for the council to create further comms. Allowing also **Community based design** to be incorporated reinforcing the campaign within a strongly branded framework.
- **Large campaign banners** were fixed to park boundaries and leisure centres borough-wide.
- **We produced an integrated mix of media** including posters, lamp posts and park banners, bus sides and backs, DLR and newspaper ads, web pages, news and feature placement, council vehicles, plasma screens, direct mail and internal communications.

498 words

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SUMMARY OF RESULTS

- The target set for the cumulative total was 19%, – the borough exceeded its target by reaching 19.51%. The six month cumulative total for October 08 to March 09 was an impressive 21.53%.
- In March 2009 the highest monthly recycling rate ever was achieved – 24.89%.
- In January this year, residents recycled more than 1,220 tonnes – equating to around 150 double-decker buses – which is over 10% more than they did last January.
- A sample audience of cross department Tower Hamlets Council staff were issued with a questionnaire, the results are as follows:
 - 72% agreed that the campaign raised staff awareness and improved their recycling rates.
 - 88% reported that the campaign had been effective or very effective.
 - 83% stated that the clarity of the message and strapline encouraged residents to recycle more and to be better informed about recycling.
 - 81% said that they thought the appearance of residents with their name and their own recycling quotes was either very effective or effective.

“It’s been fantastic to see the residents and children on all the posters explaining why they recycle and how easy it is. It’s a chance for our residents to say in their own words why recycling is important”. James Blake, Tower Hamlets Council Head of Public Realm quote from East End Life November 2009.

- Lead councillor for the environment Abdal Ullah said: “We are absolutely delighted that residents are backing the council campaign We Can Recycle More. People certainly seem to be behind it as everyone is definitely recycling more”.

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SUMMARY OF RESULTS

- Local press covered stories on several of the faces from our campaign sharing why they were pleased to take part and what recycling means to them.

“I’m so pleased I’m helping the campaign, I feel really proud to see the posters because it’s so important to get involved in things and do my bit with recycling. It’s important that everyone gets involved and does what they can.” Mrs Simmons, Mile End resident, quote from East End Life January 2009.

- The borough recently made Whitechapel the first market in the country to recycle 100% of its waste.
- Tower Hamlets Council has been declared a top performing council by the independent watchdog for local services in the Audit Commission's final tranche of Corporate Performance Assessments. The Audit Commission has judged Tower Hamlets Council as being a 4 star council – the highest category; and “improving well”.

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RESEARCH RESOURCES

Tower Hamlets Council Waste Contractors submit monthly figures to the Waste Dataflow Mechanism who collate the statistics before submitting to DEFRA. They are then published alongside the National Indicator Reference.

OTHER INFLUENCING FACTORS

Prior to our campaign start in October 2008 the council introduced two new recycling schemes. In July the recycling of garden waste borough wide began and a small test area within the borough as a trial for food waste recycling was introduced in September.

PR activity involved Mr Recycle More, the council's giant robot constructed from recycling bins. The robot made appearances at key borough events such as November's fireworks display and London's New Year's Day Parade spreading the word about recycling.

Design Effectiveness Awards entry form 2009

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Client signature 

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