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Client Company: Intellectual Property Office

Design Consultancy: Bell Design & Communications Ltd

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

When the UK Intellectual Property Office (IPO) tasked us with developing a communications programme that would put innovation firmly in primary classrooms, we enlisted the help of the UK's most famous contemporary inventors: Wallace and Gromit. The resulting programme, led by the "Cracking Ideas" competition for new inventions, found its way into thousands of schools across the country.

This achieved the underlying aim for the IPO, who wanted to encourage innovation in schools and raise awareness, amongst children, of the rewards that innovation can bring. Focusing on children at Key Stage 2 (years 5 and 6), it's all part of a longer-term goal of encouraging more UK children to get involved in science and technology, and ultimately to maintain the UK's position as a global leader when it comes to invention.

Having been licensed by Aardman Animations to use their characters, we developed an integrated campaign that focused not only the competition but also on providing valuable resources for teachers, who would be the real ambassadors for the programme. The unifying feature was the distinctive visual style, which was based on the look and feel of the Wallace and Gromit series. We applied it online, in a direct marketing piece and on downloadable worksheets and lesson plans, based on the National Curriculum.

From the day the campaign launched, it was a huge success, generating enormous interest as evidenced by the 11,000 page impressions on the launch day itself. But the bigger impact came over the following months, with more than 2000 competition entries and some 8 per cent of primary schools downloading the worksheets – significantly above the benchmark figure of 2 per cent response for national campaigns to schools.

(279 words)

<http://www.belldesign.co.uk>



## PROJECT OVERVIEW

### 1. Outline of project brief

The goal underpinning our brief was to get primary school children interested in invention – and help them understand that innovation can bring a number of rewards. The IPO had already decided that it wanted to use a competition for inventions as the core of its campaign. Our task was to publicise the competition so that schools would want to enter.

The specific objective was:

- to get 8 per cent of the 22,500 primary schools across the UK to enter the competition. This would equate to 1800 entries.

Alongside this, there was a secondary goal of encouraging teachers to include innovation as part of their Key Stage 2 teaching – not only getting children to be inventive, but explaining some of the principles of intellectual property and how it protects inventions and inventors.

### 2. Description

Watch children at play, and invention is never far from the surface. But in the classroom, that innovative spirit seems buried. As the official government body responsible for Intellectual Property (IP) rights in the United Kingdom, the UK Intellectual Property Office (IPO) is committed to supporting and encouraging innovation, and had identified schoolchildren – and particularly younger children at Key Stage 2 – as a target audience. Shortly after this age, children are required to make choices about which subjects they study, and with numbers choosing science subjects continuing to dwindle, there is a clear need to get more young people interested in innovation and engineering and to see the rewards of it.

The IPO planned to run a competition that would awaken the innovative spirit, and get children engaged in invention. It recognised that one of the best ways of doing this was through involving schools, and giving teachers both a reason and a resource to discuss innovation in the classroom.

### 3. Overview of market

As we approached the brief, it was clear that there were two distinct audiences:

- schoolchildren in Year 5 & 6 (Key stage 2)
- the head teachers, senior management teams and class teachers in the UK's 22,500 primary schools.

Whilst a single overall theme would work for both, the development and execution of this would need to differ markedly. Whereas the communications to children needed to inspire and excite, the message to teachers had to be more functional. With over 15 years' experience working with government education departments, and communicating with teachers on their behalf, we understand just how much material teachers receive from different organisations. For communications to work with this audience, the usefulness and relevance must be immediately apparent.

### 4. Project launch date

June 2007



## 5. Size of design budget

£70K for design and delivery of print and online elements.

## 6. Outline of design solution

The programme was led by a competition for the best invention. This would not only lead to publicity opportunities, but also underline to children the critical message: that innovation can lead to reward. But the hard work of the programme needed to be behind the scenes: getting children interested in innovation as a subject, and getting teachers to download the worksheets.

The approach we took centred on two of the UK's most famous contemporary inventors: Wallace and Gromit. Aardman Animations licensed us to use their characters to capture the fun and adventure of invention, and we named the competition "Cracking Ideas" – a characteristic Wallace phrase, which also emphasised the notion of cracking a problem. We then used the distinctive visual style of the animations as the basis for our designs.

We developed an interactive website, styled to look like Wallace and Gromit's laboratories, with giant rivets and cogs intermingled with domestic items put to unusual uses. The structure of the site was vital. It was initially divided into three zones:

- Competition Zone – where visitors could enter the competition and view some of the other entries so far.
- Student Zone – this encouraged children (and their parents) to find out more about invention, featuring sections on great inventors, the process of turning an idea into a product and the hugely popular "failed inventions" section
- Teachers Zone – from where teachers could download structured worksheets and resources based on the National Curriculum for Key Stage 2. This made it easy for teachers to start talking about invention and get children interested, without diverging from the core teaching requirements.

Wallace and Gromit were very visible in the Competition Zone, as a key tool in generating and maintaining the interest of the age group, but as children got more involved in the Student Zone, the cartoon characters made fewer appearances: instead, we focused on maintaining the overall visual style, but using a range of different images such as other inventions. Within the Teacher Zone, the resources had a clear link to the "Cracking Ideas" campaign brand, but the emphasis was on usability.

The site was underpinned by a content management system which enabled the IPO to manage competition entries and school registrations – details they could then use to inform future campaigns.

To promote the programme, we not only worked on the competition materials but also a direct marketing piece, sent to head teachers and senior management teams two months before the competition launched. The DM piece was an interactive CD-ROM, developed using Flash and containing original Aardman footage of the two inventors. Sent in a clam-fold shell which featured the first execution of the design style, it helped build awareness and anticipation of the programme and particularly the competition. It also featured three worksheets as a key element of its content.

(468 words)



## SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The Cracking Ideas competition was launched by the Minister for Science and Innovation on 7 June 2007.

### **Huge immediate response**

Thanks to the DM piece and PR work (see subsequent section), the immediate response was enormous, with some 11000 page impressions on the website on the launch day alone. Later research (published in January 2008) showed that the largest proportion of teachers (26 per cent) heard of Cracking Ideas via the CD-ROM.

### **High levels of competition entries**

From a possible 22500 UK primary schools, over 2000 entered – equivalent to a 9 per cent return. This showed how well the competition captured the children’s imagination.

### **Excellent conversion rates**

With the underlying aim to raise awareness of innovation and get teachers discussing it in class, the fact that some 8 per cent of schools downloaded workschemes was a huge success for the IPO. The average benchmark for teacher engagement with national campaigns is around 2 per cent. Crucially, out of those teachers who used the resources as part of their class, 91 per cent went on to register with the IPO and 45 per cent went on to enter the competition.

### **Changes in attitude / perception**

In addition to the research figures cited above, the evaluation published in January 2008 showed that

- individual web pages had most impact on the childrens’ quality of innovation, propensity to innovate and class discussion
- those who used the teaching resources accounted for 82% of people who thought the website ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ helpful
- of Teacher Zone users, 92% found the website ‘very helpful’.

These figures underline the effectiveness of the design of each zone – successfully meeting its goal of inspiring children and providing a valuable resource for teachers.

### **Other**

With a content management system in place to capture names and addresses, Cracking Ideas also helped UK IPO understand the levels of interest within schools more effectively, which will inform future communications and strategies.



## RESEARCH RESOURCES

These figures come from quantitative research conducted by Bell with ORC international. 100 teachers were interviewed during December 2007 and January 2008.

## OTHER INFLUENCING FACTORS

Alongside the direct marketing piece, there was a targeted PR campaign to raise awareness of the competition, which led to it being featured in educational publications including *Primary Choice*, *Junior Education* and *The Times Educational Supplement*. On the launch day itself, following careful seeding by Bell's PR team, there was considerable media interest in 'Cracking Ideas'. BBC News 24 mentioned the competition hourly from 9:30am till 1 on the launch day, putting the design, the name and the two cartoon characters in front of the TV audience. Further coverage was secured on ITV, in *The Times* and across a range of local and regional media. In total, for the £30,000 PR budget, Bell secured the equivalent of £1million media coverage – a return on total investment of over 700%.

Despite this, the biggest influence on teachers (according to the evaluation) was the CD-ROM they received directly – not least because most of them were in the classroom while the TV reports ran! More importantly, the CD-ROM materials gave them a much richer understanding of the overall programme, beginning with the clam-shell cover which unfolded to reveal the compelling messages about the competition – and the rich content of the CD itself.



## THE MATERIALS INNOVATION AWARD

N/A