

Category: 13, Design for Society

Client Company: Crimestoppers

Design Consultancy: Bell Design & Communications Ltd

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the first wanted posters, high-impact design has been used to encourage the public to help catch criminals. Bell Design's work for Crimestoppers' Operation Captura brought this tradition into the 21st century, forming part of a multimedia campaign that led to six of the ten most wanted UK criminals hiding on the Costa Blanca being arrested – making it the most successful campaign in Crimestoppers' history.

Operation Captura is an ongoing programme that aims to track down UK criminals who are believed to be on the run in Spain. Led by UK charity Crimestoppers and the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA), it has conducted some 30 appeals for information since its launch in October 2006.

Following highly regarded work on the Crimestoppers annual report, Bell was asked to develop campaign materials for a new appeal, focusing on just ten "most wanted" individuals. The materials needed to encourage the ex-pat community in particular to contact Crimestoppers with any information they might have about these individuals.

Crimestoppers needed maximum impact from a limited budget. Bell's creative work delivered just this. Using a striking typographic design, we produced a series of posters, flyers and beer mats for distribution in destinations favoured by expats across the Costa Blanca. The central concept was built on the children's game "I Spy", making it instantly memorable but also tugging at an individual's sense of social responsibility and directing them to the Crimestoppers website to find out who the criminals were.

The results were stunning. Calls to Crimestoppers soared: on the day of the launch, the charity received 40 per cent more calls than normal and website traffic was 10 times the normal level. Best of all, within a fortnight, four of the ten most wanted had been arrested, and two more were brought in over the following months.

(299 words)

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



PROJECT OVERVIEW

1. Outline of project brief

Operation Captura is a programme that seeks to trace UK criminals that are hiding out in Spain, so they can be brought to justice. Like other Crimestoppers' programmes, it works by encouraging members of the public to provide anonymous information which can then be passed on to law enforcement agencies.

Bell was briefed to develop campaign materials for a new appeal within Operation Captura focusing on tracking down the 10 most wanted UK criminals in the Spanish Costa Blanca. The objectives of the appeal were:

- to drive people to the Crimestoppers website and look at the current most wanted list to see if they recognise any of them
- to encourage members of the public to contact Crimestoppers anonymously with information they may have about any of these most wanted criminals, either via email or by contacting Crimestoppers on either its UK or Spanish number
- to generate high quality leads to pass on to the police
- ultimately, to arrest as many of these criminals as possible. Previous campaigns had resulted in an average arrest rate of 43 per cent; we were tasked with improving this figure.

While there was no specific time limit on when people should respond or pass on information, the appeal needed to encourage swift action as any delay might mean the fugitives had moved on.

2. Description

Crimestoppers is an independent UK charity working to help solve crimes. Established in 1988, it enables members of the public to give information anonymously about crime and criminals. Information provided to Crimestoppers has led to more than 84,000 arrests, £100m worth of stolen goods being recovered and almost £150m worth of drugs being seized.

The success of Crimestoppers in the UK led to it beginning a programme, in partnership with the UK's Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA), to try and track down individuals suspected of involvement in serious crime who were now believed to be on the run in Spain. Since its launch in October 2006, Operation Captura has made some 30 appeals for information, ranging from individuals accused of murder to those wanted for major drug trafficking offences. In each case, the appeals have focused on getting members of the public to visit the Most Wanted section of the Crimestoppers website to see if they recognise the suspects – and then encouraging them to provide information about where the suspects can be found.

The programme had been quite successful, achieving a number of arrests and generating lots of information about other fugitives in Spain. The next step for Crimestoppers was to move Operation Captura into the Costa Blanca region, focusing on a list of ten criminals who it was believed were hiding near Alicante.



3. Overview of market

As a charity, Crimestoppers has a restricted budget for all its appeals. It therefore needs to find a way of getting its message to those most likely to be able to help track down the fugitives – which in this case meant targeting the ex-pat community, and in particular, the friends, family and partners of wanted criminals.

For these individuals, anonymity is absolutely crucial: they must have complete confidence that their information will not put them at risk, either from reprisals or from being arrested themselves. Therefore a crucial part of the communication is to emphasise Crimestoppers' status as an independent charity, separate from the police.

Secondly, the target audience needs to be convinced that providing that information would be doing the right thing for society as a whole: not just appealing to their better nature, but also emphasising the fact that the police know the suspects are in the area and will continue to look for them.

The final challenge was the fact that there had been a number of previous appeals. This one had to stand out and look fresh if it was to have the desired impact.

4. Project launch date

November 2008

5. Size of design budget

£4331

6. Outline of design solution

We based our design solution on the children's game "I Spy". This offered a number of benefits:

- It provided an engaging means of pulling at someone's sense of social responsibility, encouraging them to participate in the campaign and go online to check if they recognised any of the most wanted – then act if they did.
- It is instantly memorable: people seeing the appeal would complete the phrase for themselves, and understand instinctively that they are being asked to get involved and look out for something.
- The idea of 'spying' suggests anonymity and discretion – central issues for Crimestoppers.

The design was based around high-impact typography: strong fonts and white and red lettering on a black background. This not only kept costs down (using a 2 colour print process and removing the need for imagery) and adhered to Crimestoppers' brand colours, but crucially made sure the materials had an immediate impact and conveyed the seriousness of the message, even though the language was that of a game. The other merit of this approach was that it drew on the work Bell had done for the Crimestoppers annual report, which had been exceptionally well-received because of its immediacy. In a programme where there was no budget for research, it paid to use something that we knew created the right feel straight away.

The design was applied to posters/ flyers and most notably beer mats in the bars and cafes of the Costa. Here the I Spy message was emphasised by a hole at the centre of the beer mat – literally making it a spying device.



The high-impact materials were distributed by Crimestoppers themselves with help from the British Consulate through the Costa Blanca region. They targeted ex-pat shops, bars and restaurants as well as media outlets. In each case, the call to action directed people clearly to the Crimestoppers website and a Spanish freephone number, from where calls are automatically routed to the Crimestoppers call centre in the UK.

(320 words)



SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Crimestoppers measures the impact of its appeals in three key ways:

- number of calls and website visits
- number of actionable 'logs' or pieces of information it can send to law enforcement agencies
- number of arrests or similar hard outcomes.

The "I Spy" appeal performed exceptionally well against each of these measures.

Increased calls and website visits

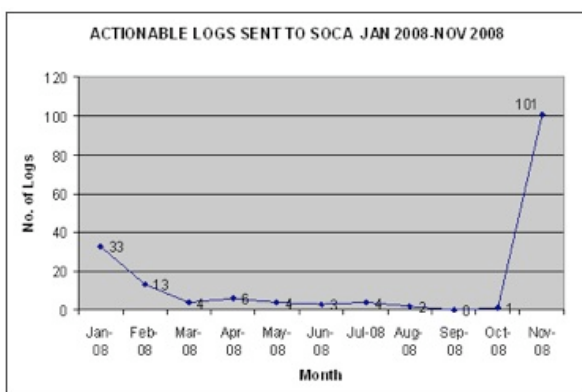
The best way to trace the immediate impact of an appeal is the public response. In this case, it was phenomenal:

- On the day the appeal was launched, the Call Bureau took over 40 per cent more calls than normal.
- The website traffic reached unprecedented levels.
 - o The site had more than 25,000 hits, which is over 10 times the normal level.
 - o 95 per cent of these were unique visits, emphasising the broad impact of the appeal.

The success continued over the following days, with some 11,242 visitors on Friday (1 day after launch) and 5,106 on Saturday (2 days after launch). This equated to more than half a normal month's website traffic in just three days. Overall, the site traffic was three times the amount achieved from the previous campaign in January 2008.

Increased actionable information

Crimestoppers sends all valuable leads as logs to enforcement agencies such as SOCA. In the first ten months of 2008, it had sent 71 such logs to SOCA, including in the immediate aftermath of the previous campaign. Within two weeks of the launch of the new appeal (on November 19), it sent more than 100 logs – a massive increase, as the graph below indicates.



Increase in arrests/ measurable outcome

The most important measure of all, of course, is whether the appeal leads to arrests. Since the launch of Operation Captura in September 2006, there had been 3 appeals with most wanted lists which had led to 13 arrests in total. This gave an average arrest rate of 43 per cent over the two-year period.



The appeal Bell worked on exceeded this figure within weeks. Within 24 hours of its launch, two of the 10 most wanted were arrested, followed by two more in the next ten days. Subsequently, one fugitive who had been in Spain was tracked down in Hungary in February, and a sixth arrest was made in June 2009. This gives a return of 60 per cent arrests to date – exceeding the previous average – and the appeal remains live.



RESEARCH RESOURCES

The resources used to validate these results are:

- Crimestoppers call log data
- Crimestoppers web data, and
- arrest records from SOCA and the Spanish authorities.

OTHER INFLUENCING FACTORS

Previous appeals had been entirely based around PR, and the Crimestoppers in-house PR team were again involved in this appeal, gaining a range of coverage including a feature on BBC Breakfast and reports on Spanish TV, as well as in the press, all of which featured the campaign materials prominently. These PR successes notwithstanding, in Crimestoppers' eyes, it was the materials on the ground in Spain that made the difference this time round.

"Getting our message out in the bars and cafes of the Costa Blanca was so important," confirms Hannah Daws, Head of Communications for the charity. "It provided an ongoing reminder of the appeal and crucially made sure that our telephone number and website were always around. The posters were so striking and the beer mats were a brilliant idea that literally put Crimestoppers in front of our target audience's eyes!"



THE MATERIALS INNOVATION AWARD

N/A