

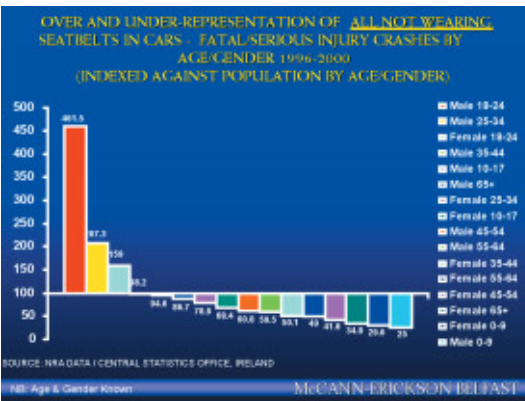
# 'Damage' Seatbelts

Advertising changing attitudes and saving lives.

## INTRODUCTION

Seatbelts are an essential lifesaver and the National Safety Council of the Republic of Ireland have the target of reducing road deaths.

Analysis of road traffic casualty statistics over a five year period identified 15-34 year olds as the target audience. Males 18-34 and females 18-34 were the most over-represented, compared to their population share, as killed and seriously injured victims who were not wearing seatbelts (Figure 1).



## MARKETING BACKGROUND

In April 2001 the overall seat belt wearing rate in Great Britain was 89.8%, compared to 57% in the Republic of Ireland. The back seat wearing rate in Great Britain was 78%; compared to 20% in the Republic of Ireland.

Extensive qualitative research with the target audience revealed the key insight behind their dismissal of seatbelts was the acute sense of discomfort they felt with the physical and social exclusion which wearing a rear seatbelt generated. When restrained in the rear of a vehicle they

had no control, no freedom and limited self-expression whilst being denied access to the social centre of the car - the front. As a consequence they rationalised their rejection of rear seatbelts by determining that it was their behaviour, their decision, their life which had no consequence beyond themselves.

## MARKETING STRATEGY

The marketing strategy was to position non-seatbelt wearing as morally inexcusable in order to reduce the perception that seatbelt wearing is a matter of "personal choice" – "it only affects me". Therefore the communication strategy was designed to inject a moral dimension into seatbelt wearing by dramatising the impact of non-wearing. This was consistent with focus group feedback where "tell it like it is" was a recurring theme.

## ADVERTISING OBJECTIVES

1. To achieve top-of-mind awareness for the issue of seatbelt wearing.
2. To achieve measurable attitude improvements, specifically on the moral dimension by increasing the perception of non seatbelt wearing as "very socially irresponsible".
3. To influence and achieve measurable improvements in reported behaviour with reference to seatbelt wearing, including an increase in peer pressure and social encouragement to wear seatbelts.
4. To increase seatbelt wearing rates.
5. To save lives.



Client:  
National Safety Council

Agency:  
McCann-Erickson Belfast

Team:  
David Lyle  
Julie Anne Bailie  
Pamela Baird  
Dawn Reid  
Robert Lyle  
Anne Marie Gallagher  
Gavin Freeman

## **EXECUTION - CREATIVE**

The creative strategy was to take the target audience's core desire for "Love, Friendship and Fun" and to dramatise how not wearing a seatbelt can destroy the Love, the Friends and the Fun they seek. Therefore the outcome is shown to be dissonant or in conflict with their core desire, psychologically encouraging the target audience to change the attitude or behaviour (i.e. not wearing a seatbelt) which causes the dissonance.

The strategy needed to connect with the target audience through the induction of personal relevance. "That could be me" in the back seat or "that could be me" as a young driver or friend is a desired response. To push home this personal relevance the creative strategy was designed to draw us into the for-real world of the target audience in an engaging narrative style.

It was also intended that the creative would leave the target audience anticipating the regret that the main character would feel by confronting the target audience with the moral consequences of not wearing a seatbelt.

Finally the Creative Strategy was to uncompromisingly position non-seatbelt wearing as Morally Inexcusable: "No Seatbelt. No Excuse."

## **MEDIA**

The media objectives were to make the core target audience AWARE of the campaign and to INTERVENE with this audience ahead of Point of Danger situations.

The campaign launched on the 13th June 2001. The objective of the first burst was to establish awareness quickly. The June launch was followed by a second burst commencing late August to target the back to school / back to college / back to work period.

Due to budget considerations at the time of the launch, TV was the sole medium used. Between June and

September 1066 TVRs were bought against all adults (92% 1+ and 77% 3+ coverage achieved) and 793 TVRs were bought against 16-34 year olds (90% 1+ and 78% 3+ coverage achieved), with the overlap of ratings from Ulster Stations helping to boost the delivery. RTE, TV3, TG4 and Sky Ireland were utilised.

The media buying strategy was influenced by the creative treatment which had to be hard-hitting to penetrate the target's existing complacency. The advertisement had a post 9pm restriction and 80% of ratings were bought between 21:00 and 23:29 and 20% of ratings bought post 23:30. 65% of ratings were bought as centrebreak and 35% as endbreaks.

## **RESULTS - AWARENESS**

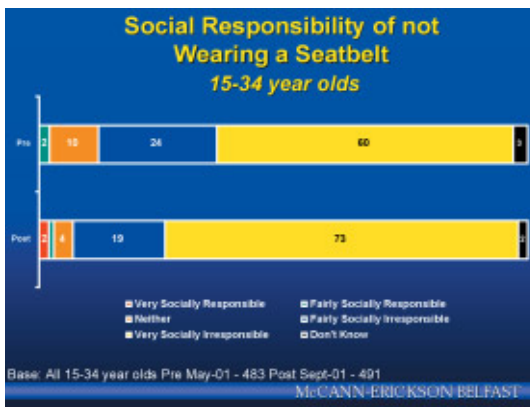
In June 2001, 'Damage' was the highest spontaneously recalled advertisement in the Irish Marketing Journal Adwatch Top Ten.

By September 2001, three months after the launch, the awareness objective was achieved with 92% recognition among 15-34 year olds (the target audience) and 90% awareness among all adults.

## **REPORTED BEHAVIOUR CHANGE**

Respondents were asked "following the introduction of the campaign", to report any responses:

- In September 2001, 74% of 15-34 year olds had "encouraged someone I know to wear their seatbelt", indicating that a significant peer pressure and climate of social encouragement had been stimulated by the campaign.
- Among 15-34 year olds, 94% confirmed a change in behaviour since seeing the 'Damage' advertising (September 2001).
- 91% of all 15-34 year olds reported having worn their seatbelts more often (September 2001).



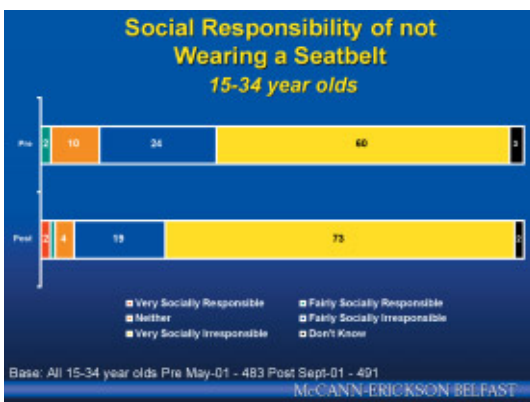
### ATTITUDE IMPROVEMENTS:

'Damage' successfully increased the perception that not wearing seatbelts is "Very Socially Irresponsible" from 60% in May 2001 to 73% in September 2001 (increase 13 percentage points) among 15-34 year olds (figure 2).

Strong agreement that "not wearing a seatbelt is selfish" increased to 86% post-campaign (September 2001), with those who "strongly agree" increasing 18 percentage points.

The perception that "to wear a seatbelt or not is a personal choice because it does not affect other people" was successfully reduced by the campaign, with disagreement increasing to 78%. Those who "strongly disagree" with this perception increased by 12% (figure 3).

The moral inexcusability of not



wearing a seatbelt was increased by the campaign. The perception that not wearing a seatbelt is "very inexcusable" increased by 10% among 15-34 year olds demonstrating that the campaign was impacting on the social climate around the social inexcusability of not wearing a seatbelt.

### CAMPAIGN INFLUENCE

The role of advertising in driving these Attitude and Behaviour improvements is revealed in the post-campaign

research. Asked "to what extent does this advertisement influence you or not influence you" the response was consistently high across all demographics but, specifically among 15-34 year olds, with 78% confirming that the campaign "influences me a lot", a further 17% "influences me a little", giving the campaign an overall reported influence on the seatbelt wearing of 15-34 year olds of 95%.

*RESEARCH EVIDENCE All Attitude Tracking evidence, unless otherwise stated, was independently conducted by Irish Marketing Surveys Group, now trading as Millward Brown IMS.*

### SAVING LIVES

In the twelve months following the launch there were 5 fewer deaths on the roads in the Republic of Ireland. Damage launched in June 2001 and 2001 recorded the lowest number of road deaths since 1994.

While road deaths for 2001 have decreased, compared to 2000, robust figures for a period of five years are needed for conclusions to be drawn. 2001 figures have yet to be verified therefore breakdowns isolating non seatbelt wearing fatal and serious injury data is unavailable.



The following true story from Highland Radio, a local radio station in County Donegal, is most pertinent. Following the 'Damage' launch, presenter, Shaun Doherty recalls a conversation with a live caller as follows:

*"A father of two called in to the show, wanting to share his story with other people. He had a young daughter, who, since seeing the ad on TV, had constantly pleaded with him to wear his seatbelt. They were in the car one night when the daughter insisted that he put it on "or you could end up with brain damage like the girl in the ad". To pacify her he put it on. Fifteen minutes later he had to swerve to avoid an oncoming car and his vehicle smashed into a lamppost. "Without the seatbelt I would have almost certainly been killed – just like the ad."*

Given that government figures calculate that the economic and social cost of each road fatality is over €1.7 million, this one incident means that the 'Damage' campaign has already paid for itself, in a life saved – after only weeks on air.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

The campaign was successful in achieving top-of-mind awareness for the issue of Seatbelt wearing, with awareness among all adults reaching 90% and 92% among the target audience.

Attitude Improvements towards Seatbelt wearing were evident with an increase in those who feel it is "very socially irresponsible" not to wear a seatbelt.

The campaign has had a positive impact among the target audience with 91% agreeing they are wearing their seatbelt more often. 74% of 15-34 year olds had "encouraged someone I know to wear their seatbelt", indicating that a significant peer pressure and climate of social encouragement had been stimulated by the campaign.

### **SUMMARY**

This case study demonstrates how McCann-Erickson Belfast repositioned non-seatbelt wearing as selfish and socially irresponsible, increased seatbelt wearing and saved at least one life.

The perception that "not wearing a seatbelt is selfish" increased with 86% of the target audience strongly agreeing post-campaign (September 2001).

The perception that "to wear a seatbelt or not is a personal choice because it does not affect other people" was successfully reduced by the campaign.

The perceptions that not wearing a seatbelt is "Very Inexcusable" and "Very Socially Irresponsible" increased among 15-34 year olds demonstrating that the campaign was impacting on the social climate around the social inexcusability of not wearing a seatbelt.

Furthermore in the first three months, the campaign generated awareness among the target audience of over 90%, of which 95% reported to have been influenced by the campaign and 91% reported to have worn their seatbelts more often.

