

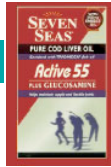
SEVEN SEAS - ACTIVE 55

Being over 50 isn't what it used to be

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INTRODUCTION

The Rolling Stones and Seven Seas Cod Liver Oil may at first sight seem unlikely bedfellows. This case study, however, suggests otherwise. It outlines how Seven Seas Active 55 succeeded in exploiting the brand equity of one of the world's most famous rock bands by connecting itself with their sell out concerts in Dublin's Point Theatre in September 2003. This was achieved not through a multi-million euro sponsorship deal, but through an imaginative low budget tactical campaign, which ultimately resulted in a huge amount of interest, free publicity and talkability around the brand.

PRODUCT AND MARKETING BACKGROUND

Active 55 is a high strength Cod Liver Oil product that was developed and launched by Seven Seas Ireland for the Irish market in September 2000. As the name implies, Active 55 is aimed at adults over fifty who want to maintain an active lifestyle by keeping their joints flexible and supple.

From launch, Active 55 has maintained a consistent positioning based on a strong consumer insight. Research carried out amongst the target audience prior to launch showed that expectations of a long and healthy life are the norm today – expectations that stand in sharp contrast with those of the previous generation.

Better nutrition, better health services, better lifestyles and fewer hardships have all contributed to a sense of feeling 'younger' for longer. This is reflected in the growth of early retirement, active retirement groups, foreign travel and the discovery of a whole range of new interests and activities in retirement years. This new mood was summed up by one respondent who said:

'When my mother was 60, she looked about 80. She looked like a really old lady compared to me.'

The research findings led to a clear and single-minded proposition for Active 55 – that 'being over fifty isn't what it used to be'.

THE MARKETING IDEA

By 2003, Active 55 was established as a major player in the Vitamin, Mineral and Supplements market and was worth 20% of the Seven Seas Cod Liver Oil business. The product proposition that 'Being over fifty isn't what it used to be' had been established above-the-line through seasonal bursts of press and radio advertising.

In early 2003, it was announced that the Rolling Stones were coming to Dublin to play two nights as part of their World Tour. This was big news: the Rolling Stones hadn't played in Ireland since 1982 and tickets for the two concerts sold out in a record six minutes.

We instinctively felt that this presented an exciting tactical opportunity for Active 55. We saw the Rolling Stones as living testimony of the product proposition that 'being over fifty isn't what it used to be', so we started looking at ways of piggybacking a tactical campaign on the publicity generated by the concerts.

OBJECTIVES AND CREATIVE SOLUTION

The creative brief was straightforward and single-minded. We wanted to raise awareness of Active 55 and the role it can play in keeping joints flexible and supple by creating a link to the Rolling Stones who are the antithesis of the old fifty/sixty something stereotype. We saw humour to be of particular importance to the communication, which was meant to be taken in a light-hearted manner. We wanted to target people over 50 who couldn't quite believe they were now at the stage of life that used to be referred to as 'middle-aged'. They remembered their own parents at their age and how much older they seemed.

Whether or not they were fans, they grew up with the Rolling Stones and are of the same generation. They would therefore be able to identify with a communication using the Stones to exemplify that your fifties and sixties can still be rock 'n' roll years.

This brief resulted in the creation of three outdoor executions, which centered around lyrics from the Rolling Stones most famous songs linking back to the proposition that 'Being Over 50 isn't what it used to be with Seven Seas Active 55'.

MEDIA STRATEGY

The media placement of the creative was critical to the success of the project. With a limited budget, we had to make the media work as hard as possible by placing the outdoor in and around the concert venue, thus ensuring it would be seen by our target attending the gigs and that it would be understood in the right context.

Our solution was to book a selection of 48 sheet and 6 sheet sites in and around the Point Depot in the lead up to the concerts. There was just €4,000 spent on media in total. Finally, to ensure as much coverage of the area around the Point as possible, automobiles were booked on both days of the concert to drive around the general area.

RESULTS

The objective of this tactical campaign was to create a link between the Rolling Stones concerts and Active 55 and, in doing so, increase the profile and generate a buzz and talkability around the brand. In this regard the results surpassed all expectations. In the lead up to the concerts there was huge media hype generally but in particular it focused on the ages of Mick, Keith, Charlie and of course the baby of the band Ronnie Wood (56).

The scene was then perfectly set for the Active 55 campaign, which received a staggering amount of media attention and coverage in such high profile newspapers such as The Irish Times and the Sunday Business Post. It also was the subject of lively discussion on RTE's 'Morning Ireland' and the David McWilliams show on Newstalk.

The coverage of the campaign was universally positive with the Irish Times calling it: 'One of the most refreshing and clever campaigns'. They went on to say that 'The Seven Seas strap line used in all the ads - "being over 50 isn't what it used to be" - cleverly reflects what Jagger and Co. have been saying in recent interviews - that even those with lined faces and greying hair have a right to stay up late playing loud music'.

The success of the campaign was further confirmed on David McWilliams Show where McWilliams was under the impression that Seven Seas had sponsored the Rolling Stones gigs. When Newstalk's Marketing correspondent Gary Browne was asked for his opinion of the campaign he said he found 'the whole thing fascinating and .. nice and clever for a change. I think it's a brand looking at themselves in a tongue in cheek way....and I actually think it's quite a good fit... I think the Rolling Stones are the most surprised people that they've actually reached 60 at all'.

Overall the coverage and publicity achieved around the campaign delivered a return out of all proportion to the media investment of just€4,000; less than the cost of one TV spot on the Late Late Show!

Although the object of the activity was about increasing the brand's profile and creating a stir rather than purely driving sales, the first two weeks of September 2003 saw sales increase by 70% in comparison to the first two weeks in September 2002. There was no other marketing support for Active 55 during this time.

The Active 55 Rolling Stones campaign was awarded both the Grand Prix and the Media Idea of the Year awards by Marketing magazine earlier this year, leading to a further burst of free publicity for the brand.

SUMMARY

The Rolling Stones concerts in 2003 presented an unmissable tactical opportunity for Seven Seas Active 55. They were sure to generate huge media interest and hype. They were also living proof of the Seven Seas Active 55 proposition that 'Being Over 50 isn't what it used to be'

A low budget campaign was developed to raise awareness of Active 55 by creating a link to the Rolling Stones, the antithesis of the old fifty/sixty something stereotype. A series of outdoor executions based on famous Rolling Stones song lyrics were posted around the vicinity of the concert venue in the lead up to the gigs.

The objective of the campaign was to create a buzz around the brand and bring to life the proposition that 'being over 50 isn't what it used to be'. The campaign was incredibly effective, capturing the attention of high profile newspapers and radio shows such as the Irish Times and Morning Ireland.

Overall this case study highlights how a low budget tactical idea, borne out of a sense of right place, right time, right message all worked to deliver a very significant return on the initial investment.

