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BACKGROUND

What rights do kids have? – What rights should kids have? – Who should decide?

A Green Paper was published in September 2003 that raised this issue – how best to protect children and prevent them from being excluded from society. The Home Office wanted to put these proposals in front of kids and give them the opportunity to feed back. Clearly this is an extremely dry legal document meant for legislators rather than teenagers so to get kids to respond we needed to bring it to life.

THE CHALLENGE

How do you get 11-16 year olds to talk to the Home Office?

We needed to deliver the topic in such a way that would engage young people, get them thinking and then air their opinions.

A telephone survey to deliver these objectives for this budget would have delivered around 2,000 responses and this set a benchmark for this campaign's delivery.

There was no creative agency or additional budget for creative available for this campaign.

STRATEGY

1. Bring the topic to life

We wanted to create scenarios that dramatised real crime situations - a talking point for us to explore teenagers' views on rights, responsibilities, crime and punishment. The kid becomes the Judge and Jury – completing the ending of the story by deciding what punishment they think is most suitable. The kids were asked to add their own comments and opinions on the Government's proposal relating to that particular story.

2. Get the right media brands behind it that kids respect

We worked with six websites to deliver this campaign. MTV, i-level, COI and the Home Office team worked in partnership to develop the scenarios, with MTV injecting their brand and understanding of the target audience. MTV gave the message credibility and engaged teenagers. This age group are extremely brand literate, they know what's in and what's not, so it was important to get the right brand onboard. This audience engage far more with visual communication. They demand to be entertained especially when asked to interact and respond, so working with MTV created the bridge between the government and the Teenager.

3. Don't talk at kids, let them do the talking

With the backing of a brand like MTV it was easier to get kids to open up and let them see that it was important to have their say. It was critical that the tone of the communication positioned response as an OK thing to do – giving them the chance finally to have their say on stuff that affects them.

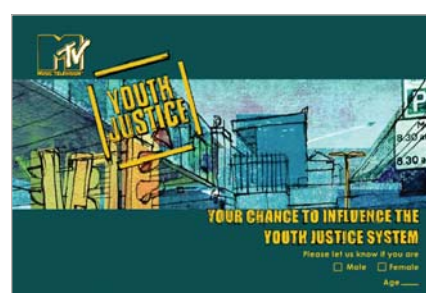
IMPLEMENTATION

MTV-branded advertising ran across the site, driving traffic to the microsite. 'Justice For All', a homepage editorial piece, also stimulated them to find out more. On entering the feature viewers were asked their age and sex in order to qualify the response. MTV's design team created the microsite to i-level's brief.

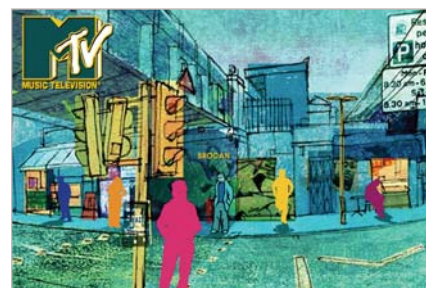
A street scene theme was used for the microsite homepage featuring six characters. Each character had a story to tell, and viewers could follow the story through, finding out about the crime and deciding on the appropriate punishment from a range of options. Once a punishment was selected, viewers were prompted to give their views on what factors are important when considering a sentence.

i-level and MTV worked together from the outset. The partnership included:

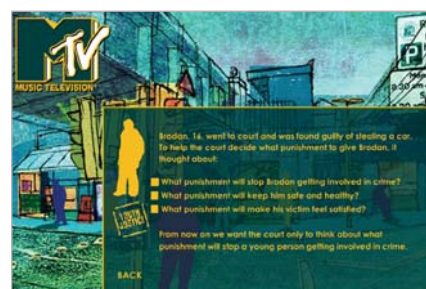
- Design of the creative concept.
- Design and production of a microsite.
- Considerable advertising and editorial support to drive traffic to the microsite.
- Design and production of advertising.
- Collation of results and weekly reports to Home Office.
- Optimisation throughout the 3 month period to maximise response.



Animated intro to the microsite



Viewers click on a character to read their story



Viewers fill in their ending and comments



RESULTS

The campaign was an outstanding success:

- 6,000 completed questionnaires generated overall.
- At approx. 1/3 the cost of a telephone survey.
- 4x as many responded online than the paper survey.
- Scenario-based research created real engagement, with thousands of open responses:

"i think that Anita should go to prison for several months because what she did was very wrong, it's a shame for elderly people who can't live their lives happily because of all these sad dumbass nerds".

"Young people's prison sometimes might be better than their everyday lives, in prison, they have tvs, warmth and comfort, this is not right!".

"This was a truly innovative campaign for the Home Office – a great collaboration between us, COI Comms, i-level and MTV." Lynn Fidler & Lydia Fitzpatrick – Snr. Marketing Mgr's, Home Office.

SUMMARY

This collaboration had the agency and publisher working together from the outset to produce something that couldn't have been done alone. MTV's line into teenagers gave life to i-level's strategy, creating a meaningful and effective communication with a tough audience