



Creature Discomforts

Country: United Kingdom

Organisation: Leonard Cheshire Disability – www.lcdisability.org – www.creaturediscomforts.org

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Partners involved: Aardman Animations (interviews and film production), Freud Communications (advertising agency), Andy Tilley of Unity (media strategist), Delete (website and online seeding campaign) and Markettiers4DC (audio feature for radio news)

Target Group: General public, particularly those over 35 with children

Programme Description:

Leonard Cheshire Disability is the UK's largest voluntary sector provider of care and support services for disabled people. The charity supports over 21,000 disabled people in the UK and works in 52 countries. It campaigns for change and provides innovative services that give disabled people the opportunity to live life their way.

In a recent survey conducted by the Charity public awareness of disability is very low. When asked, 70% of the British public could not name a single disability organisation. Many people ignore disability and easily turn off any message about it, particularly those using disturbing images as shock tactics.

Leonard Cheshire Disability, partnering with Aardman Animations, wanted a message that dispelled stereotypes of people with disabilities. By choosing to use the Creature Comforts format they chose a vehicle that people could already relate to.

Aardman Animations interviewed disabled people first and then created the animations around them. Testimonies from disabled people relaying their experiences of being disabled, how they feel about the stigmatisation of disability and people's attitudes towards them were used to create the campaign. Eight 30-second animations were produced and broadcast across the UK.

The campaign also included radio adverts, outdoor posters, online advertising and a wealth of materials such as postcards and badges. A documentary about how the films were made and the real people behind the animation was also produced. The launch of the campaign was reported on by the UK press and as far afield as Russia, Brazil and New Zealand. It has received over 1000 pieces of news coverage across all types of media since November 2007, helping to reinforce the message to "change the way you see disability".

"This awareness campaign urges us: "Change the way you see disability" and you'll see disabled people differently too. See the person as a whole and you'll start to think that there might be better ways in which they could shape society." Reverend Rosemary Lain-Priestley discussing Creature Discomforts, BBC Radio 4

Challenge: Taking a historically taboo subject and making it accessible to the public who very often do not have any connection with disability, and to do this without alienating disabled people themselves.

Solution: Leonard Cheshire Disability did this using the Aardman style, much-loved for its ability to bring home messages in a simple, everyday way, and making a serious point, with humour.

Impact and Success Stories:

- A third of people interviewed after watching Creature Discomforts admit they have more to learn about disability and are willing to do so.
- There is a 34% increase in people who would come to Leonard Cheshire Disability for information and 20% uplift in potential support and involvement.
- Likeability scores for the animations were at 75% and above: extraordinarily high for an unappealing subject like disability.
- 200 schools, companies and public sector organisations have requested copies of the campaign for training in disability awareness and equality.