

Agency

GOSS, Gothenburg

Client

Gothenburg Homeless Aid

Product

Charity

Title

The Homeless Letter

Country

Sweden

Background

Christmas is the most important time of year for the Gothenburg Homeless Aid organization. It's the time when people tend to give more to those less fortunate than themselves than at other times of the year.

It's also the time when the organization hopes to raise most of its funds for the year ahead.

Idea

If it's hard to get people's attention with direct mail, it's even harder at Christmas. Simply to make the letter stand out in the avalanche of Christmas cards and commercial mailings, the agency let it spend a night out in the streets. Literally. Once the letter had experienced the same wetness and cold as the homeless of Gothenburg, it was mailed.

Results

In total, 22% of all recipients donated an average of just over 29 euros (approximately CAN\$40), a 15% increase of recipients from the previous year's results, donating an average of 21 euros. The campaign as a whole raised 163,000 euros (roughly CAN\$240,000) – a lot for a relatively small city.

Insights

This idea clearly dramatizes the problem of life on the streets. Of all the letters lying on your doormat, which one are you going to look at first? In at least nine out of ten instances, it will be the bedraggled, dog-eared one for no other reason than it looks different from all the others.

As John Caples noted in *Tested Advertising Methods* over seventy years ago, if you can't appeal to people's self-interest, appeal to their sense of curiosity.

Once opened, the letter is beautifully understated, allowing the reader's mind to imagine what it must be like to spend a night out in the rain and the cold.

So simple, so powerful, so very successful.

CREATIVE TEAM

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