



Man Bites Dog

Severe Weather Warning: The European Climate Map

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Objectives

In the wake of the financial crisis, firms across Europe were forced to make sudden and severe cuts. The focus quickly switched from growth to survival as business conditions deteriorated.

By 2011, growth across the continent remained stagnant. Suffering squeezed margins, and having already trimmed as much 'fat' as possible, business leaders were struggling to maintain the productivity of a workforce that was beginning to feel overworked and underpaid.

In spring 2011, global management consultancy Hay Group (HG) challenged Man Bites Dog (MBD) to devise a pan-European PR campaign that would chime with the prevailing business environment, but offer constructive advice to a boardroom audience rather than sensationalise the doom and gloom.

HG had bold ambitions for the campaign to:

1. Raise awareness of HG's benchmarking data capabilities and leadership consulting expertise.
2. Position HG as a leading authority on leadership and organisational culture among boardroom audiences.
3. Secure impactful coverage in pan-European English language titles.
4. Provide HG's European network with tailored in-country data and content to secure coverage in-market.

IDEAS ARE THE ONLY SOURCE OF DIFFERENTIATION

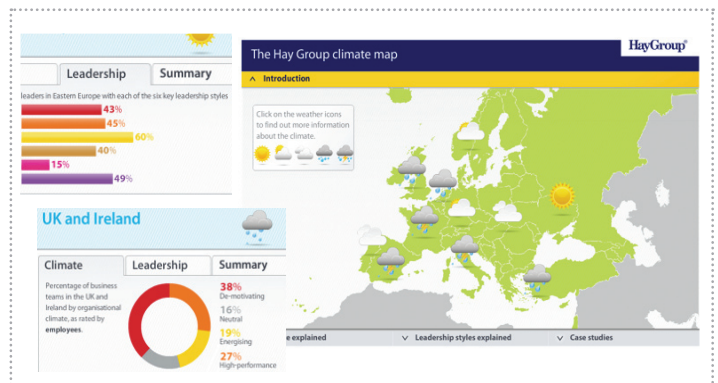
Strategy

MBD's strategy was to investigate the prevailing workplace 'climates' across Europe and typical leadership styles.

MBD created the concept of a 'weather map' of workplace conditions and launched the campaign in July. As well as conveying a complex issue in an easily digestible, visual format, the strategy would capitalise on heightened interest in weather as people looked to head abroad in summer.

MBD devised three tiers for the campaign:

1. European cut-through: Build an impactful story uncovering broad European trends for international media.
2. Digital cut-through: Create an interactive infographic weather map that could be launched through digital media channels.
3. National cut-through: Create simple toolkits to equip HG's individual country marketers with compelling data-driven content for national rollout.



Method

MBD worked closely with HG's marketing team and database experts to extract the required information from HG's proprietary benchmarking data, collected from some 70,000 employees across Europe.

Tier One: European Cut-through

MBD distilled the data into a compelling media story, revealing that Mediterranean lifestyle clichés are not reflected in the workplace.

This challenged the perception of an easy-going Mediterranean outlook and a stricter Northern European attitude. When it comes to the workplace, the opposite was proven to be true.

MBD also uncovered a strong variance in leadership styles driving this trend. Whilst companies in the south of Europe emphasise authority, northern firms foster democratic leadership. We gave this a creative, seasonal spin:

Cold front moving south: While the sunny weather may attract millions to Mediterranean coastlines each year, the workplace climate in these countries is far bleaker.

MBD secured an exclusive in Wall Street Journal Europe and followed with a full launch to pan-European media.

Tier Two: Digital Cut-through

HG and MBD created an interactive Climate Map infographic to engage audiences online and drive targets to the Hay Group website.

The map was launched over social channels including Twitter and Facebook, online media outlets and relevant business and HR blogs across Europe.

The infographic categorised workplace climates into sunny, stormy, cloudy, rainy, etc. to build a weather map, whilst users could click on specific regions and countries to gain more complex analysis of predominant leadership styles within those areas.

Tier Three: National Cut-through

MBD and HG packaged up the overall story as toolkits for HG country-level marketers to generate national coverage locally. These included a template press release, data tables, 'Tweet sheets', translated versions of the infographic, and a bylines pitch with which to follow up the initial media launch.

MBD and the HG Europe marketing team formed a 'nerve centre' on launch, to coordinate the local rollout across Europe and field any urgent media enquiries that could not be handled in-market.

Results

Severe Weather Warning moved the dial for HG in Europe, driving significant awareness of the company's data capabilities, but more importantly its strategic consulting expertise.

The creative weather map format was a successful 'trojan horse' – drawing in inquisitive audiences before revealing the extent of HG's true strength – its capacity to diagnose and advise on complex organisational issues impacting workforce productivity at Europe's largest firms.

This message was extremely timely. As business leaders were frantically looking to achieve more with less, HG was able to highlight the productivity impact of leaders' behaviour on their workforce. This offered a new lever for managers to pull in the fight against declining revenues and margins.

Media results for the three tiers of activity were exemplary:

Tier One: MBD secured an exclusive, dedicated article in the Wall Street Journal Europe following an in-depth interview with HG's spokesperson.

Tier Two: The story and link to the Climate Map was extensively retweeted on Twitter. Primary online media outlets and blogs across the UK and Europe also hosted the map on their websites, including HRN Europe and major web portal Delfi in the Baltic states.

In Spain, the findings were announced on Intereconomia TV against the backdrop of a projected image of the interactive weather map. Elsewhere, a number of broadcast channels and business publications used the map concept to inform the layout of their reports on the study, generating captivating coverage.

Further, HG hosted the map on its website, creating an engaging platform with "sticky content" that encouraged visitors to explore the findings in full detail, and the wider implications for their business, country and Europe.

Tier Three: On rollout across Europe, the content generated more than 20 pieces of national and broadcast coverage across every major territory, in addition to many more business and online media hits.

Highlights include two live radio interviews on the Netherlands' BNR Nieuwsradio, live TV and radio interviews on Spain's Intereconomia TV and Intereconomia Radio, top national newspaper reports in: De Telegraaf, Het Financieel Dagblad and Het Parool (Netherlands); Handelsblatt and WirtschaftsWoche (Germany); Kauppalehti and Taloussanommat (Finland); and Açoriano Oriental (Portugal).

The campaign was highly cost effective as it was built around HG's existing data assets, and has been shared as best practice by the firm's global PR head with other continents now looking to replicate the campaign in their territory.

"The Climate Map campaign supported our business objectives by significantly raising awareness of our data and business consulting capabilities across Europe. It supported country-level marketers by providing rich, engaging content that could be easily adapted to suit their individual market - gaining valuable exposure of our brand in key territories."

Anna Patterson, European PR and Marketing Manager, Hay Group.

DELIVERING A RETURN ON IDEAS

About Man Bites Dog

Man Bites Dog is the most award-winning business-to-business PR consultancy in the UK. We specialise in public relations for the service economy: turning our clients' intangible expertise into 'Man Bites Dog' stories.

If you're looking for bright ideas to captivate audiences from newsroom to boardroom give us a call to find out how we can give your PR and thought leadership more bite.

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