

MONOPOLY LIVE CASE STUDY

Executive Summary

DDB London, Tribal DDB and Hasbro turned traditional toy marketing on its head for the launch of Monopoly 'Here & Now', and created *Monopoly Live*, a real-time game of Monopoly, played out on the streets of London. Not only did the game create buzz and allow consumers to connect with the brand, but it also drove sales of Monopoly Here & Now Limited Edition game for Hasbro.

Background

Monopoly 'Here and Now' is a limited edition version of Monopoly created to celebrate the 70-year anniversary of the classic board game. For the first time in Monopoly's history, the board was updated to reflect modern-day London, with new movers, new locations and new property prices.

Hasbro briefed DDB London to develop a creative advertising platform for the launch as part of an integrated launch campaign that included high profile PR and promotional activity.

Business Objective

To launch the Monopoly Here and Now board game to the public and drive awareness and sale. To demonstrate that Monopoly is a modern, up-to-date game.

Target Audience

The traditional target for Monopoly is Mums with kids aged 8 to 13 years, although a rich alternative target existed of 'everybody else' particularly teens, 20 and 30 somethings owing to the modern appeal of the updated game

Communication Tasks

The key communication tasks were to drive high volume sales of the new Monopoly 'Here & Now' edition, while building consumer excitement and awareness around the launch, and clearly communicating the new and contemporary product features of 'Here & Now'. The main challenge was to make consumers fall in love with Monopoly again.

Budget

- Over £500K campaign

Strategy

The challenge was to re-ignite people's passion for Monopoly, whilst communicating all the new board game changes. Rather than relying on a more traditional, passive, advertising approach, DDB London and Tribal DDB decided to get consumers to actively play Monopoly *against each other*. However, the real consumer buzz was generated by using London City itself as a full size game board, with real black taxi-cabs as the 'live' playing pieces! A grand prize of winning your mortgage or rent paid for a year was further incentive for players to compete for the title 'The UK's richest property tycoon'.

Taking this approach allowed the communication to resonate much more strongly, as consumers familiarised themselves with the changes to the new Monopoly board over a period of days, rather than the seconds in an ad.

A fully integrated campaign was developed, with TV and radio activity promoting both the 'Here & Now' game and the 'Live' game in their messaging. Online advertising also broke the story to people with a Yahoo homepage takeover and a large awareness driving campaign.

The advertising itself, however, only acted as a springboard for consumer transmission of the news of the game, the principal route to find the live game was via PR and word of mouth.

Creative Solution

Monopoly Live

The live game was played online and via SMS.

To play the live game, players registered free at www.monopolylive.com, chose their piece, represented by a London taxi, selected their cabbie driver and decided where to spend their £15 million capital. 18 Monopoly-branded taxis were fitted with a GPS transmitter, using top-of-the-range security technology, so that their location was known at all times.

As the taxi drove around London, it picked up and dropped off passengers as normal, and the player paid out rent as their cab passed properties they didn't own, and received rent when other cabs passed their properties. The grand prize was winning your mortgage paid for a year, and there were also daily and weekly prizes to play for.

There was also an SMS element to the game – people could SMS for bonus cash – which deepened involvement with the game.

Hasbro was able to gather consumer data from the registrations for use in future promotions.

There were links from www.monopolylive.com to the Toys R Us website where consumers were able to purchase the game.

TV / Radio / Online advertising

The TV and radio spots by DDB London, and online advertising by Tribal DDB were designed to raise awareness and drive traffic to the site. A short burst of high-impact advertising ran for one week.

The humorous TV spot featured a Japanese tourist on a tour bus, becoming increasingly bewildered by the tour guide's commentary on how London has changed. Media planning and buying was through OMD.

Online marketing included advertising across major portals and ownership of the Yahoo UK Homepage on launch day

PR & Word of Mouth

Brazen PR ran a high-profile PR campaign to maximise press coverage throughout the campaign. The story appeared in the press in the week prior to launch, and coverage in Financial Times, Times newspaper, Evening Standard and Esquire Magazine as a result of a charity press launch held on June 16 with Cherie Blair. Tribal DDB also seeded the site in discussion forums. Through this activity around 10,000 pre-registrations were obtained.

Continuing PR during the course of the promotion obtained coverage on BBC World's *Click Online* show, as well as coverage on wired.com, slashdot.org and a number of influential media publications online. This combined with a relentless stream of low-level forum seeding, ensured the promotion stayed visible for the full four weeks.

Word of mouth also played a massive part in the success of the promotion, players were able to invite friends, for an incentive of £500,000 extra (in Monopoly money) to play with for every friend who signs up. This ensured the viral spread stayed logarithmic over the first days of the promotion.

Results

The Monopoly 'Here and Now' Limited Edition board game is already one of the best selling games of 2005. This is even more of an achievement if you consider these figures when board game sales are traditionally in a period of hibernation.

During the 28 days the site was live, 189,699 people played Monopoly Live. Over one million people visit the website in total. Each player played three games on average, and on each visit remained on the site for over five minutes.

The PR coverage alone generated well over £2million of value for Hasbro – nearly five times the cost of the entire campaign. Whilst generating a buzz was a primary objective, there were other significant returns on investment.

Monopoly Live has also bolstered the Hasbro CRM database by almost 100,000 opted in users, keen to hear about new developments from Hasbro.

The game itself is now a valuable asset for Hasbro, and there are plans to possibly develop the idea further.

Ends