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1. Profile

The National Library of Wales was founded in 1907. It is our aim to provide Knowledge for All by offering a quality service of international importance to the 85,000 people who use our iconic building in Aberystwyth each year and the 2 million who make virtual visits. The Library is home to 6 million books, a million and a half maps and almost a million photographs. Our Screen and Sound Archive also comprises a quarter of a million hours of film and television and 150,000 hours of radio and sound recordings. We also house fifty thousand pictures.

2. Title

DYLAN : Marketing the Dylan Thomas Exhibition and Events by the National Library of Wales in 2014

3. Context

In 2013 the National Library of Wales saw an opportunity to be part of the Government of Wales's official celebrations to mark the hundredth anniversary of the poet Dylan Thomas in 2014; this developed into the Dylan Thomas 100 (DT100) project. Following this, the Library drew up a successful application (to the Government and the Arts Council of Wales) to attract a grant to contribute activities to the year of celebrations, activities that would extend the Library's presence and attract audiences that would not, in the usual course of things, engage with the Library in any way. In other words, by organising a series of projects (to complement a large-scale exhibition of Dylan Thomas's work being arranged at the Library itself) the Library would be marketing itself to new audiences, while also creating new partnerships with the creative community, the education sector and one particular location in the United States. Carrying out these individual projects was, as it were, the marketing plan - they were organised, to a very great extent, specifically to target new and specific audiences for the work of the Library.

The projects would take us to new territory as regards audiences – e.g. the tourism market, Dylan Thomas devotees and the modern dance community, with the objective of stimulating the long-term marketing of the extensive Dylan Thomas material in our collections. They would also enhance the Library's status as a dynamic and relevant cultural body.

Possibilities were perceived as regards being able to focus (for an entire year) on promoting a specific theme of work and being part of the wider DT100 'brand', thus increasing our data base of users.

We did, however, face several challenges, including the fact that some people were prejudiced against the Library as an 'old-fashioned' institution. The nature of the material in our possession also made it difficult to display and present (and thus demands creative interpretation and promotion). In addition, it would be true to say that the Library did not have extensive experience of conducting marketing campaigns for an entire 12 months, and the individual activities within the project would need to be programmed in such a way as to enable us to promote them effectively to specific markets at different periods, while maintaining the concept of those individual activities as part of a larger, unified project.

4. Aims & Objectives

The project's aim was to organise and stage the following events in 2014, using the Dylan Thomas material in the Library's collections, in order to attract new audiences to the National Library -

Exhibition (large scale): June - December

Creative 'Young Readers' and 'Teenage Thomas' workshops with schools (led by recognised trainers): Autumn Term

'Innocent as Strawberries' - performances for schoolchildren by the Arad Goch theatre company: September

'Caitlin' - a live performance (and a film of it for release on YouTube) by the dancer Eddie Ladd: August - September

'Ych a Fi' - an installation of Dylan Thomas's writing shed by Russell Roberts and Peter Finnemore: June - December

A Public Symposium to discuss the Dylan Thomas celebration year: December

There were specific targets for the above activity:

- Attracting 20,000 visitors to the exhibition and the associated events
- Attracting 300,000 visitors to the on-line material
- Attracting 1,250 participants to the events for children and young people
- Attracting 100 people to the Dylan Thomas Symposium

These were ambitious targets

In addition, there were objectives that were less direct and less measurable (and less SMART), such as -

Contributing to a wider campaign to raise the profile of Dylan Thomas in Wales and beyond

Raising awareness of the Dylan Thomas materials in the Library's possession

Staging an effective promotional campaign that would convey the project as a dynamic and distinct entity

Selling the exhibition as an opportunity to view unique material for the first time

Emphasising the work done (through the project) in interpreting the Dylan Thomas collections afresh

The rough timetable for the marketing campaign was -

August 2012 - March 2013: creating and developing the marketing strategy

March - October 2013: planning and developing the individual activities forming the project; carrying out preliminary work and research as regards identifying the target audiences and the particular contact methods

October - December 2013: Planning the Marketing Campaign

January - December 2014: Implementing the Marketing Campaign

July - December 2014: Staging the activities and the exhibition

January 2015: reviewing the effect of the project

Marketing Budget. A budget of £4,000 had been allocated for promoting the events and £2,000 in the Library's central marketing fund for promoting the exhibition = a total of £6,000.

The personnel in charge of the marketing plan were the staff of the Marketing Unit with assistance from the Exhibitions and Education Units, all accountable to the Project Board.

5. Strategy & Planning

Broadly, the strategy was first of all to brand the project so that it would be identified as one corpus of work with various activities associated with it. Secondly, to create a variety of partnerships and thirdly, to target our individual promotional campaigns carefully.

As a result of the range and ambitious nature of the project, we had to work at several levels to reach those target audiences.

The following target markets were identified, to be targeted according to the needs of the individual activities.

Current visitors to the Library -

Users of the Library's education service

People attending exhibitions

Other users - readers, those attending events, conference attendees

Members of [Library] Membership Clubs and Library Sponsors

New Audiences -

Dylan Thomas devotees

Cultural tourists

People interested in dance, literature, theatre and photography

The audiences of our partners (the Dylan Thomas Centre and Literature Wales)

Academics and lovers of literature (for the Symposium)

We set about researching the most effective contact methods for reaching these new markets, and producing material, or identifying methods for the targeting.

We also set about producing special goods for sale in our shop on the basis of the "bow tie" design used to brand the campaign.

6. Tactics

A visual 'brand' was created for the project, based on the image/logo of Dylan Thomas's bow tie. This brand was employed across the contact media – in printed materials, on the website and on the goods produced by, and for, our shop. This 'brand' was live throughout the project and expenditure on it was within the budget noted.

Arrangements were made for our project to be a prominent part of the central DT100 marketing plan – on their website and through their other contact methods e.g. their printed programme of activities, throughout the project period.

Lively partnerships were created with the Dylan Thomas Centre and Buffalo University in the USA to ensure co-operation on the joint creation of stories for the press (material was borrowed from

Buffalo for display at the Library and in Swansea that had never before been exhibited in Wales, and this received considerable coverage in the press and the media) .

The press and media were targeted with specific stories on aspects of the exhibition and journalists from the United States visited the Library seeking information about the exhibition.

A joint campaign with Literature Wales was discussed. While this was not an entirely successful element, it created a fresh link between the two bodies.

A special website, <http://dylan.llgc.org.uk> , was created, and a special Twitter stream for Dylan DT tweets – this now has 150 followers

Printed materials were created encompassing the exhibition and the associated events

Contact was made with various schools, directly and through the Arad Goch company, to attract audiences to the activities for children and young people

Dance audiences in the Aberystwyth area were targeted for Eddie Ladd's performances of the work 'Caitlin'. These were a completely new user group for us.

Academics were targeted for the Symposium with prominent use of the social media before and during the event e.g. #symposiumdt

At a more general level, the following methods were employed across the whole project -

The Library's regular postings - mainly information in our 4-monthly events programme

A press and media campaign - concentrating on specific aspects of the project over a period of time

Advertising (selective) - concentrating on the project in its entirety and specific aspects of it as necessary

The Library's Website -

a special section on the project in the first place, to be followed by a subsidiary website 'Dylan Online'

Use of the Library's social accounts (Twitter and Facebook) to promote specific elements of the project

The Library's YouTube channel was used to show the results of some of the projects with young people and Eddie Ladd's entire performance of 'Caitlin'

Through 3rd parties - e.g. printed materials at Ceredigion tourist information centres and the Dylan Thomas Centre, Swansea

7. Outcomes

Each of the individual elements promised for the project was accomplished and was within budget

A total of 25,783 people visited the Library during the period of the Dylan Thomas exhibition (June – December 2014)

There were over 302,000 visitors to our website over the same period

Our outreach activities were attended by 1,219 people, including over 500 schoolchildren

The Symposium was attended by 27 people

Although certainly not everyone who visited the building visited the exhibition, and nor did everyone who visited the website visit the pages dealing with the project, we consider these figures a success. The target for the Symposium was not achieved, but was in any case an ambitious one, and the event was at the end of the celebration year, after the main celebrations.

Our work for and with schools was a great success – to such an extent that it received an award from the Scottish Power Foundation and additional funding to stage further activities linked to the project.

There is no doubt that the project has attracted new visitors to the Library, especially so in the case of the production, 'Innocent as Strawberries' which introduced the Library to audiences of young children for the first time, and also the performances of 'Caitlin'.

While this could not be measured directly, we consider that the project increased awareness of the Dylan Thomas material in the Library's possession. In addition, the Dylan Online website created a prominent legacy for the project and the 'Caitlin' production has gone on after the project, with

possible performances at the Edinburgh Festival over the summer this year and a recent nomination for the Wales Theatre Awards (winners to be announced on 31 January 2015).

8. Date

Length of the project: Summer 2012 - December 2014. Specific length of the activities: June - December 2014

9. Summary

The DYLAN promotion campaign was an ambitious project on several levels to draw attention to the very wide range of activities arranged by the National Library of Wales to celebrate the centenary of the birth of Dylan Thomas in 2014. The campaign is characterised by the mix of traditional promotional methods together with more modern techniques used to target individual audiences within one large-scale project. A memorable visual brand was created, and employed on printed materials, various advertisements and goods, as well as the website Dylan Online and inventive methods of communication such as a Twitter stream to which people could contribute, typing them in directly at the exhibition. The campaign succeeded in attracting new 'niche' audiences to the Library and in creating new partnerships in Wales and beyond.