



THE LITTLE STEPS THAT GENERATE BIG RESULTS

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3.4 Communication – Direct Marketing

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 **natural
scotland**
SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

THE WORK OF HOME ENERGY SCOTLAND IN TACKLING FUEL POVERTY

The Energy Assistance Scheme (EAS) is a flagship scheme tackling fuel poverty amongst the most vulnerable households with practical help. A vital part of meeting the Scottish Government's targets for eradicating fuel poverty and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

It is marketed through a single point – the Home Energy Scotland (HES) hotline and website, offering free impartial advice and a path (if eligible) to having insulation, a new boiler or central heating installed.



THE EVER GREATER CHALLENGE. HOW TO ENGAGE AN AUDIENCE WHO HAVE FAILED TO ENGAGE WITH PAST CAMPAIGNS

Different schemes have sought to help the fuel poverty audience in the past. Energy Savings Trust (Scotland), Scottish Power, SSE, British Gas Scotland, other suppliers and in recent years, HES, heavily promote energy efficiency advice and insulation schemes.

The bottom line is exposure to a lot of marketing across many channels. Insulation selling was getting a reputation as the new double glazing.

The effect? Most willing to seek assistance have done so by now – leaving a core that may be in desperate need but have proved immune to HES marketing.

Declining response rates illustrate this. The EAS mailing response rates halved from 6% in 2009 to only 3.2% in 2011. We managed to reverse this downward trend in 2012 when we switched from winter to summer mailings with a response rate of 4.4%. But our job only gets harder as we are left with those hardest to engage. Our challenge was to maximise response rates from a marketing resistant audience.

OPTIMISING THE TARGETING


A sophisticated targeting model existed which Experian had created to identify fuel poverty households for DM. However, to leave no stone unturned, we sought to evolve and refine that targeting approach by identifying 'lookalikes' - households who looked a lot like those benefitting from EAS in the past.

A core target was identified of 145,000 most-in-need, fuel poverty households across Scotland.



UNDERSTANDING THE BARRIERS WAS KEY TO ENGAGING THIS AUDIENCE

Identifying the audience efficiently is one thing. A bigger challenge was engaging an audience who had proved immune to past marketing. Research highlighted a series of entrenched barriers to successful communication and helped us unlock creative and messaging solutions.

CHALLENGE...	SOLUTION...
<p>Marketing weariness and wariness. Our heavily marketed audience had become used to ignoring offers of energy efficiency and insulation advice from the private sector. <i>"It's usually someone trying to sell you something or get you to change supplier" **</i> <i>"difficult to know who to trust... who do I listen to?"*</i></p>	<p>Lead in a very visible way with the more trusted Scottish Government / Natural Scotland Brand. <i>"very popular as a source of information and advice... credibility... trust.... independent of vested interest"*</i></p> 
<p>Cynicism – offers too good to be true. All offers of assistance have been coloured by false sales promises of headline savings for switching. Living in poverty, many have simply become cynical about being helped in a no strings, life changing way.</p>	<p>Explain the basic offer in straightforward terms. We deliberately avoided hyperbole and sales language.</p>
<p>Self-exclusion – I probably won't qualify anyway. Eligibility criteria are a fact of life so we have a tricky balancing act. Enough criteria information is needed to overcome self-exclusion and attract potentially eligible enquiries whilst not attracting floods of enquiries that swamp the contact centre. <i>"a prevailing assumption was that most would not qualify for help"</i></p>	<p>We created an inclusive / exclusive tick box device – and cited big numbers assisted. This stated 'If you say yes to ANY of these questions, you should call today'. This got the balancing act spot on. We also stated that 'we've helped over 800,000 homes across Scotland' to help convince them assistance wasn't a false promise.</p>
<p>Contacting 'organisations' doesn't come easy or naturally. Many in our audience don't come forward easily, living lives that can be quite isolated. Some are offline. Others may lack confidence dealing with 'officialdom'. <i>"with no clear route to advice, many were inclined to disengage"</i> <i>"they don't know who to ask or how"***</i></p>	<p>A range of methods made it as easy as possible to get in touch.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • telephone 0800 • reply paid postal coupon • website <p>The '3 steps to a warmer winter' device makes the process feel straightforward, simple and manageable.</p>
<p>The challenge of selling a winter benefit in summer. Energy Suppliers generally market offers in colder weather when the issue is most front-of-mind. All but one past EAP campaign were winter based and baseline enquiry levels are far higher in winter.</p>	<p>Make a virtue out of the 'un-seasonal' winter message. We tackled this head on with headlines like 'Take steps now to make this winter warmer' and '3 steps to a warmer winter'. Simple, engaging and positive.</p>
<p>Delivering a manageable flow of responses. It is always good DM craft to create a manageable flow of responses for the enquiry centre staff.</p>	<p>Use reply options, staged mailings and eligibility tick box device to spread enquiries. The range of reply options would spread enquiries out to a degree (i.e. telephone spikes early / web & post facilitate call back during quieter periods). We staged 7 mailings over May to August 2014.</p>

Research Sources cited:

*TNS insight research 2012

** EST Levers research 2009

APPLYING ALL THIS INSIGHT WITHIN CREATIVE

All of our targeting, messaging and audience insight was utilised. Almost every detail was crafted and constructed to work as hard as it possibly could. These are the 'little steps' that each add up.

It has to get past barriers to get opened, disable barriers when read and persuade them that this offer is genuine and for once, they should seek help.

HOW DOUG THE CATERPILLAR GAVE THE COMMUNICATION LEGS

We have to give them everything they need – but no more than that. Overloading this audience with a heavy looking read will backfire. What is equally needed is a creative idea that can lift and unify the content and engage this audience.

This existed in the form of 'Doug the Caterpillar' – the official 'spokesinsect' for Home Energy Scotland developed by The Leith Agency.

Doug the caterpillar is a brilliant idea for application within direct marketing. A friendly character that embodies the cosiness and warmth of a well-insulated and heated home. Many of our target audience are older and can relate to the homespun feel of a knitted draft excluder. Another key segment is single parents and they and their kids can relate to the soft toy qualities of Doug.

Doug was used to point at or emphasise key messages – and to generally lift the feel of the communication so it felt engaging, not daunting. He helped to highlight call to action sections that spoke to an audience who don't readily take action. He makes it look easy!

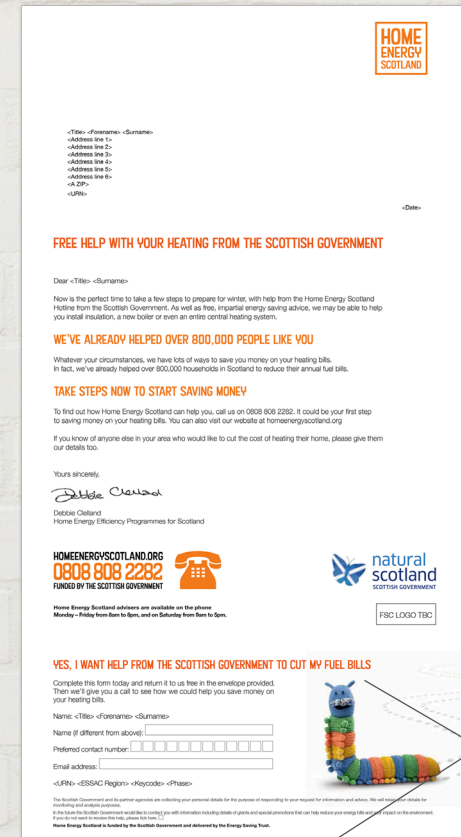
Tackling marketing weariness and wariness through Scottish Government branding and non-sales language



Follow Up Postcard



Mail Pack



Doug makes it feel easier to take action



An inclusive tick box to attract as many potentially eligible people as possible

HOW DOUG DELIVERED

Despite taking place at an unseasonal, more challenging time of the year, the campaign proved hugely successful.

Success versus challenging targets.

Against an overall campaign target of 4%, the campaign generated a 4.9% response rate – almost 20% higher than targeted and a significant increase on the 2012 campaign.

The chart below illustrates the effect the campaign had on the baseline enquiry levels to the HES enquiry centre.

Success in bucking the longer term trend of declining response rates and a shrinking target pool.

Response rates had declined from a level of 6% in October 2009 to 3.2% in January 2011. In 2012, the first time the campaign took place in the summer rather than winter, we managed to reverse this downward trend with a response rate of 4.4%.

The task for the 2014 campaign was to repeat this level of success against an ever tighter and heavily marketed target pool and a 4% target was deemed realistic. The fact we managed to boost response rates further to 4.9% to achieve the highest response rate since 2010 was a testament to the power of the targeting and creative.

Most importantly, success in helping fuel poverty households.

Percentages are essential in proving response success but at the end of the day, this story is about helping people.

In total the campaign generated 7,032 responses across Scotland, all benefitting from assistance on energy efficiency.

Scottish Government estimates average annual savings at £669 per household. A massive amount to people for whom every penny matters.

Collectively, the campaign could have put as much as £1,081,773 back in the pockets of some of the poorest households in Scotland. Savings that will go on for many years in homes that are now warm and efficient.

And contributing to reductions in CO2 emissions.

Scottish Government estimates of total carbon emission savings annually for the homes assisted are 2,836 tonnes – equivalent volume to fill 556 medium sized hot air balloons.

HSE Enquiry Centre call activity

Showing sustained uplift in calls over the 7 staged mailing phases of the campaign period

