

The magic of collaboration

How a collaborative approach to marketing helped influence the broader category of childcare in Scotland.

Joint entry: The Yard and Tayburn

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01. Executive summary

The Yard has provided its services in Edinburgh for the past 30 years. In that time it has gone about its business unheralded but provided a lifeline to a handful of lucky families.

As a result a strong community has been established and excellent skills developed in their version of playcare provision for disabled children and young people.

Tayburn became involved with The Yard five years ago. At that time we recognised that there was a distinct need for their amazing story to be told more effectively. We focused on the Annual Report as the key vehicle for this communication task and in so doing so we were able to understand the ethos of the organisation and over time managed to bring that story and culture to life. The reports were recognised with design awards, The Yard started to punch above its weight and confidence about their role and quality of service provision started to build within the organisation.

Today The Yard is recognised as an exceptional service and it has plans to replicate this offer in other areas of Scotland. Crucially The Yard is now seen as the accepted way forward. 'Inclusive' has long been the buzz word for service provision in this sector but what The Yard does goes against the conventional logic. Instead they provide specialist support in a bespoke purpose built environment – and it works.

The Scottish Government have formally confirmed that The Yard's specialist approach has a role to play in play provision throughout the country. As a result The Yard are now in the spotlight. 'The Yard effect' can be a reality for every disabled child in Scotland.

A good analogy for this business model is Maggie's Centre. They provide a wrapper for the existing cancer care provision provided by the NHS. The Yard are starting to provide the same role – they bring all the services for 'well-being' of the disabled child, young person and their family together in an appealing way. Appealing to the family but also to commercial supporters, crucial in fuelling the expansion plan beyond Edinburgh. This support has increased by 400% in the period 2013-2015.

This case study explains how Tayburn collaborated with The Yard and brought sound marketing principles to the fore to promote visibility, with the effect that it can now influence the wider category of childcare in Scotland.

“We want to be like Maggie's Centre –
a centre of play and well-being for disabled kids and their families too.”

Celine Sinclair,
Chief Executive, The Yard

02. Introduction to The Yard

Tayburn has developed a brand that has given them a **voice**, and helped them gain **confidence** when speaking to new **audiences**.

Scotland Yard Adventure Centre, known as The Yard, is an oasis in the heart of Edinburgh that provides indoor and outdoor adventure play facilities for disabled children, young people and their families.

The Yard aim to provide care, support, fun and friendship in equal measure while also encouraging families to let go and promote challenge, personal growth and supported independence for their children.

For children and young people with disabilities, one of the greatest barriers to enjoying life is loneliness and social isolation. The Yard helps end some of that social isolation and supports the children and young people in their care to make friends and have fun. The Yard recognise this as one of the most important parts of childhood, and essential for improving a child's mental wellbeing as well as their confidence and self-esteem.

In 2013/14 The Yard received 15,849 visits. They also work with 32 schools and provided outreach play projects in some of Edinburgh's most vulnerable communities.



*'It's a home there's no other way
to describe it'
- Gillian*

03. Ambition and clarity of objectives

Corporate income generated in the period 2013-2015 was **£268,000**, a **400% increase** on the period 2011-2013.

Last year we told the story of the first stage in The Yard's remarkable journey. Challenged with a modest budget of £8,000 they desperately needed to unlock greater funding to maintain their services. We helped them create a distinctive brand that established their reputation and was engaging enough to help them punch above their weight in terms of marketing spend. And we identified the touch point where the brand could have the greatest impact on delivering new income from a limited budget.

We developed a brand identity that 'bottled' the existing ethos and experience of The Yard and then translated this into a transformative Annual Report which was used to capture the attention of the most discerning of audiences. As a direct result of the Annual Report we saw:

- A 400% increase in corporate donations which helped The Yard invest in the right sort of talent needed to establish a consistent service and grow the charity.
- Visibility with local governments and NGOs increased which resulted in their Chief Executive being asked to speak at the Children in Scotland annual conference and an invitation to tender new play-schemes across Edinburgh worth £4.9 million.
- We grabbed the attention of DIY SOS The Big Build who transformed their facilities, ready to showcase their best-in-practice work to the world and subsequently earned media coverage worth an estimated £3 million.



03. Ambition and clarity of objectives

(continued)

- The Yard earned the support of The Big Lottery who funded research into new growth opportunities to the tune of £10,000.
- The Yard were offered strategic funding from a number of major organisations including The Christina Mary Hendrie Trust.

The shoestring marketing budget has helped create a financially stable organisation and secured the much needed care for thousands of young children and their families .

But organisational success was just the start. In the space of just a year we have used this reputation as a springboard for transforming public perception on the best-in-practice methods of benefiting children with additional support needs and have started to reach even more young children with their culture of play. This is the story of how we helped The Yard explode their unique model beyond their own charity and influence the wider culture of childcare.

This change is clearly evidenced by the The Scottish Government choosing to launch both their early years and play strategies at The Yard in 2013/14.



The people who provide this care and support at The Yard are an amazing bunch of enthusiastic and imaginative specialist playworkers.

04. Strategic thinking and objective planning

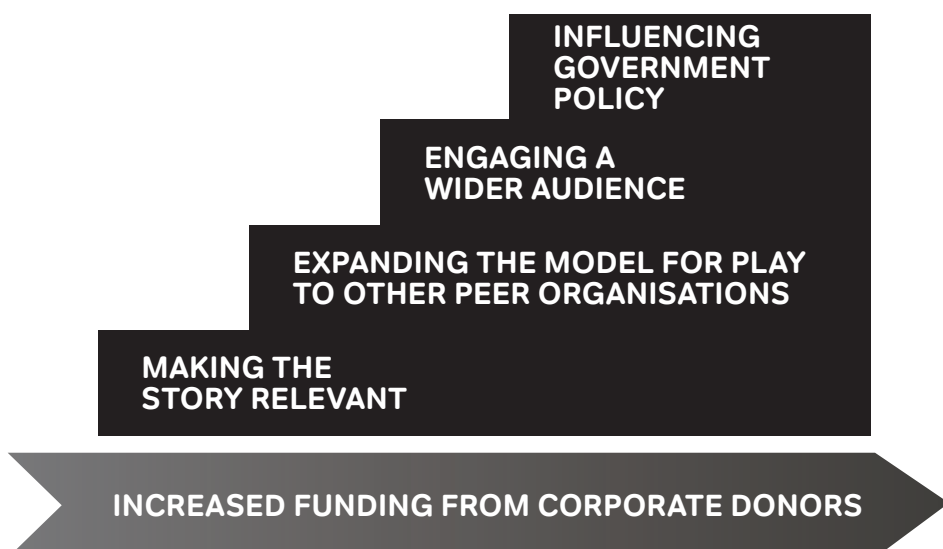
“I recently received a copy of the report and I am writing to say that this is the **most creative and engaging document** I have seen in a very, very long time. Congratulations to you and the Tayburn team for **producing such a fabulous piece.**”

Hamira Khan, Chief Officer,
Scottish Youth Parliament

Our journey towards creating greater societal influence happened in five key stages and went far beyond the traditional scope of marketing.

The conventional approach to marketing has always been top down – influence customer behaviour by communicating what your brand or business has to offer in a way that appeals to more people.

This model had brought us great success in the development of The Yard’s unique Annual Report. But to elevate this success further it would require investing in larger marketing budgets in order to get the message heard. As a charity we were conscious that every pound spent on marketing would have to come directly out of the provision of care for their children, young people and families and so Tayburn switched to a bottom up approach – influencing the organisation’s business strategy so that we could create a service that would appeal to more people and expand The Yard’s scope of influence. All the while maintaining the unique brand identity that gave The Yard the stature and cut-through to engage with key audiences in the first place.



05. Originality, creativity, execution and implementation

“Tayburn invested in **understanding** the culture of The Yard. They spent time with us to understand **the truth** of the service we provide. This investment is reflected in the **quality** of their work.”

Celine Sinclair,
Chief Executive, The Yard

Design solution

Over the five years we have been working together all of our design solutions have adopted four key principles:

- Be distinctive and engaging enough to cut through the busy charity market and get all of the right people talking.
- Find a simple yet effective way to bring the magnificent world of The Yard to life.
- Be selective about the communication channels that could amplify our ‘voice’ with minimal investment.
- Do all of the above in a consistent way to build brand awareness.

Central to this approach was the Annual Report to communicate with stakeholders but we also focused our attention on:

- Service users via the website and social media.
- Peer organisations via training resources.

Communicating effectively with stakeholders

The Annual Report has to tell the story of The Yard – what they do, how they do it and most importantly how their work improves the lives of the children, parents and volunteers.

It must also talk strategically about their ambitions, in a way that key influencers will understand.



Annual Reports 2010-2014

The award-winning reports adopt different formats but always remain true to The Yard brand messages.



05. Originality, creativity, execution and implementation (continued)

“The volume of discussion about The Yard at the 2014 Early Years Conference is a reflection of the **high level of awareness their activities have** in the Early Years community.”

Paul Dickson,
Performance Advisor,
Inspiring Scotland

Annual Report 2013/14

01. The community adventure features a rocket. Everyday packaging and scraps of material are transformed at The Yard as part of the play process.
02. The fund raising adventure features a bus. A reference to the Lothian Buses corporate support for The Yard.

Tayburn have developed this general principal in a number of ways creatively. At all times we wanted to get disproportionate stand-out and engagement. Format, materials, structure, photography, copy and illustration have all had a part to play, as has careful distribution to key influencers.

Specifically, the reports have:

- Shown The Yard in action and shared their outcomes with stakeholders.
- Used yellow and black as the key colour palette.
- Instilled a feeling of warmth and organised chaos and a sensory aspect in their production.

These reports have won numerous awards but have also been recognised for their business effectiveness by the influencers who received them.

In 2013/14 we focused the design solution on the ‘**we believe in adventures**’ message. This wording underpinned every page of the report. Over nine spreads we used materials from The Yard to create colourful backdrops for children and employees to interact with. All the photographs were shot from above.



05. Originality, creativity, execution and implementation (continued)

“Disability is a leveller. Through being here and having these experiences you are much more likely to share. **It is a place to offload and very good for siblings.** Here there are no expectations on you.”

Cathy,
Parent of regular user
of The Yard

Communicating effectively with service users

The website was re-imagined, with the service user (parents, carers, schools) front of mind.

It does this by providing a straight-forward user experience. We know that a typical user is time-stressed, a dashboard approach provides up-to-date information at your fingertips – what is on when, travel details, booking updates etc, at-a-glance. The CMS ensures the content is easily updated.

The design solution also ensures that there is an appropriate home for stakeholder information.

The new website provided social media channels for The Yard for the first time. These have been incredibly effective in spreading the word about activities and progress.



Website

The website was designed to provide all the key pieces of information a busy parent might want, at a glance.

05. Originality, creativity, execution and implementation (continued)

Communicating effectively with peer organisations

Other play providers such as schools and community groups are an important influencer channel and a new audience group for The Yard. The principals of inclusive play can be easily adopted beyond disability provision.

These types of organisations need resources to fuel their own training requirements. The Yard developed the Fun and Friendship pack to bring play training to life. Each chapter detailed practical advice in text and pictures accompanied by forme-cut inserts that detailed case study examples.

These packs were supplied to play providers, thereby helping to spread the word on The Yard's work but also on how they deliver best practice nationally too.

Fun and Friendship training resource pack

The pack contains a series of coloured envelopes printed with the brochure content and containing case study examples.



06. Scale and evidence of results

“Tayburn’s expertise has provided the confidence and voice to articulate the **positive outcomes for child and family that play provides** and what contribution it makes to the well-being of the family as a whole, for a modest cost.”

Jenny McDonald
Fundraising Manager,
The Yard

Making the story relevant

The Annual Report had been identified as the most efficient and effective way to build awareness and engagement in The Yard’s unique way of doing things. The previous Annual Reports had been focused on building credibility while capturing the unique ethos, culture and experience of The Yard in order to attract funding.

But we now needed the Annual Report to work even harder. We needed to help people understand how this unique model of play and adventure could benefit their world. We therefore used the Annual Report to bring to life the key principles or methods which make The Yard such a success and case studies on how they have been able to apply their model to other organisations.

This annual report provided the main means by which we could influence the wider world.

Results

- Developed new audiences for the Annual Report in the Corporate Sector for the first time. 500 copies mailed to corporate contacts in 2013/14.



Annual Report 2013/14

Two spreads from the current Annual Report that feature case studies on new activity.




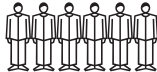


06. Scale and evidence of results (continued)

Results (continued)

- Used the Annual Report as the calling card for The Yard Ball, held in October 2014. Attended by 280 corporate guests.
- Shared the Annual Report with new influencer contacts in Fife, Angus and other areas of Scotland to help pave the way for geographical expansion.

Expanding the model for play to other peer organisations

The Yard has seen considerable growth but it is still only one of many centres for caring for children with additional support needs. By reaching out to these organisations and sharing the unique stories we were able to establish a number of partnerships with other centres and youth clubs to help reach even more children with this new model of play and adventure.

Year	User visits	Staff numbers
2011	9,000	9 
2012	9,500	12 
2013	14,600	18 
2013	16,100	20 

Results

A number of new partnerships were developed in 2014. These organisations can be found throughout Scotland, in the private and public sector.

Partnership	Location	Sector
Action Group	National	Public
Baltic Street Adventure Playground	Glasgow	Private/Public
East of Scotland Deaf Society	Edinburgh	Private
Fabb Scotland	National	Private
Kidzcare	Edinburgh	Private
Lothian Autistic Society	Edinburgh	Public
SensationALL	Aberdeen	Private
SNAP	Inverness	Public
The Hush Club	Dundee	Private

06. Scale and evidence of results (continued)

Engaging a wider audience

The benefits of adventure play are not limited to children with additional support needs. We had long recognised that The Yard's ability to actively engage and challenge people through play could have a profound impact on every child.

We therefore set about trying to attract the attention of more affluent families without specialist support needs, so that they can experience the benefit of play for their own children. To accommodate this new audience The Yard shifted its play schedule across the week so that it was open up Sundays as a commercial offering for any family. This not only allows more people to experience The Yard, but also provides crucial funding to support the expanding requirement for care for children with additional support needs and at the same time develops new audiences and potential influencers. It also raises the bar for what families should expect from play provision in Scotland.

The Yard also launched Play Rangers as a flexible model for bringing The Yard experience out of the centre and into the wider world. The Yard's volunteers converted a brownfield site in Muirhouse into a pop-up play area with improvised materials to provide stimulating activities for young people from all walks of life.

Results

Attendee numbers for 2014/15

Playrangers	800 children
INC Consortium	2,400 children
Sunday opening	Data not yet available as started in Feb 2015

The Yard Summer 2013 outreach activity, Leith Links, Edinburgh.



“We want Scotland to be the best place to grow up. A nation which values play as a life-enhancing daily experience for all our children and young people; in their homes, nurseries, schools and communities. We chose to launch The National Play Strategy Action Plan at The Yard **because they are a great example of best practice in play provision.**”

Erica Clarkson,
Team Leader, Early Years,
The Scottish Government

Influencing government policy

But with all the will in the world, each of these individual services could only reach the lucky few families who were able to access the facilities. Furthermore there were still many areas of Scotland that believed in the old paradigm that full inclusion was more beneficial to kids with additional support needs than separating them out into bespoke schools and communities.

The Yard wanted every child in Scotland to feel the benefit of play and adventure and every child with special needs to have access to a place where they could flourish rather than cope. Their story was not about inclusion or exclusion but about choice and the opportunity to grow in confidence as a child to tackle a mainstream world.

Results

To do this we needed to influence government policy on childcare. Our earlier work with The Yard had already elevated their visibility within the government and NGO community so the next stage was to translate this visibility into action. After inviting ministers in to the Yard to experience the service for themselves The Yard has now been appointed leaders in The National Play Strategy Action Plan (NPSAP) to help embed play in the daily experience of all children in Scotland.

07. What happens next

“Josh loves getting deep pressure on his feet, it really relaxes him. He is a very hyperactive boy and **after Jen gave reflexology to his feet he seemed so much calmer.** It was so lovely for him to have that experience, as I probably wouldn't have taken him to get this done, as it would be too difficult!”

Jackie MacKenzie

Parent of regular user
of The Yard

Expanding their service from play to ‘well-being’

To keep The Yard offering fresh and relevant they are constantly assessing the cultural landscape and what is important to people in Scotland. In recent times we have seen an increasing focus on ‘well-being’ – this holistic approach to health includes emotional as well as practical support.

We have therefore recently started to expand our communications from simply ‘play’ to position The Yard as ‘a centre for well-being’. This has informed a broader package of services to encompass the idea of well-being – from family counselling, legal advice, complementary therapies for parents and carers, children and young people, and even haircuts – a centre for the whole family.

But none of this would have been possible if it weren't for the on-going funding from corporate donors. In order to support these radical new initiatives we have had to step up our approach to engaging this crucial audience and get them reaching deep into their companies pockets. In conjunction with the Annual Report we designed a number of other activities specifically tailored to the corporate market:

- In response to being offered a Lothian bus for 12 months, Tayburn produced a highly emotive and single-minded message to engage public donations for the first time.

The Yard Lothian Bus

The Yard bus being ‘driven’
by its cover stars.



07. What happens next (continued)

“The Yard is poised **to move forward with confidence.**

Our plans are robust and highly ambitious and crucially grounded in a deep seated need.”

Celine Sinclair,
Chief Executive, The Yard

- We designed a ‘fun raiser’ ball with a charity auction which generated £65,000 in donations and we produced a corporate film to further bring to life how attendees money would be put to good use and expand our reach to organisations who couldn’t be at the ball.
- Other corporate activity in 2014/15 included the involvement of Boundaries Edge who provide corporate training, Lloyds Banking Group and Cairn Energy supported the ball and more recently Tesco Bank have appointed The Yard as their charity of the year.

Corporate donations surpassed all expectations in 2014 as a result of this enhanced activity, reaching a total of £145,000 and enabling The Yard to expand their sphere of influence and overhaul the entire package of support and to fund a second corporate support team member.

The Yard are in the midst of negotiations about two new centres – one in Fife and the other in Dundee. Various business models are being explored to make these new centres a reality at the time of writing.

