



SPACE

Marketing Society Star Award 2016

Communications Category
2.2 International Marketing
Ardbeg's Ultimate Mission

‘story’
the best selling agency

Our Mission

To create a platform/activity centred around Ardbeg's first experiment in space aboard the International Space Station (ISS) to:

- Raise brand awareness
- Keep the Ardbeg Committee (our CRM programme) close to the brand and increase loyalty
- Launch celebratory limited edition bottlings
- Encourage attendance at events and grow the Committee



Pushing the final frontier...

Ardbeg single malt whisky is renowned for its bold and untamed attitude. We always push the brand story to the very limits – this time, to the outer limits! We sent experimental vials of Ardbeg up to the International Space Station... becoming the first distillery in space.

AN INTERGALACTIC PHENOMENON

Ardbeg went space aged! We capitalised on our space experiment to create a captivating platform that ran over the space (sic) of four years. We used film, emails and a global tour to keep whisky fans updated at every stage and sold out of two limited edition celebratory bottlings.



Pushing the final frontier...

GRAVITATIONAL PULL

Our intergalactic adventure spawned incredible PR – including items on BBC and CNN TV. Emails achieved incredible open rates and drove hundreds to our worldwide events. Celebratory bottlings sold out within a matter of hours around the globe. Ardbeg continues to be the fastest growing malt in its sector.



The image is a screenshot of a BBC News website page. At the top, the BBC logo is visible next to a 'Sign in' button and a notification bell. Navigation links for News, Sport, Weather, iPlayer, TV, and Radio are present. Below this is a red banner with the word 'NEWS' in white. Underneath the banner is a row of category links: Home, UK, World, Business, Politics, Tech, Science, Health, Education, and Entertainment. A secondary row of regional links includes Scotland, Scotland Politics, Scotland Business (which is highlighted), Edinburgh, Fife & East, and Glasgow & West. The main headline reads 'Ardbeg reveals results of 'space whisky' experiment'. Below the headline is the date '7 September 2015' and the category 'Scotland business'. The article features a photograph of a small glass vial of whisky on a white surface, next to a black marker labeled 'Mixing Tube-12'. The vial's label reads 'Microgravity Distillate June 2015'. A caption below the photo states: 'The vial of unmatured malt whisky spent nearly three years in space'. The article text begins with: 'A distillery that sent unmatured malt whisky into space to study the effect of near-zero gravity on flavour has described its findings as "groundbreaking"'. The final paragraph states: 'Ardbeg Distillery, on Islay, sent a vial to the International Space Station in a cargo spacecraft in October 2011.'

Ardbeg reveals results of 'space whisky' experiment

7 September 2015 | Scotland business

The vial of unmatured malt whisky spent nearly three years in space

A distillery that sent unmatured malt whisky into space to study the effect of near-zero gravity on flavour has described its findings as "groundbreaking".

Ardbeg Distillery, on Islay, sent a vial to the International Space Station in a cargo spacecraft in October 2011.

The Mission in Detail

Ardbeg single malt whisky is renowned for its bold and untamed attitude amongst whisky aficionados. We've always pushed Ardbeg's marketing endeavours to the very limits – so why not push them out of this world by becoming the first distillery in space!

In association with US based space research company NanoRacks LLC, based in Houston Texas, Ardbeg took part in a space experiment to test the effect of zero gravity on maturation.

Vials containing a class of compounds known as 'terpenes', also known as Ardbeg-crafted molecules, were blasted off into space on 30th October 2011 to be placed within the International Space Station and orbited the planet for just under 3 years.

The experiment came safely back down to earth in Kazakhstan, Central Asia in September 2014. Waiting on the ground were assorted boffins who rushed the experiment to a scientific laboratory in Houston to unlock the mysteries of maturation. Among their number was our very own whisky creator, the eminent Dr. Bill Lumsden.



The Mission in Detail

- We used these historic events to build a long-term platform to captivate the Ardbeg Committee – our worldwide CRM programme – make them proud and keep them loyal to the brand.
- We also used the platform to widen interest in Ardbeg and recruit bloggers and new smoky malt whisky drinkers to the brand.
- We took a precious vial from the actual space experiment on a tour across the globe and launched limited edition bottlings.

Finally in 2015, Dr. Bill's White Paper, was able to reveal the maturation secrets of the universe...



Our Terrestrial Audience



The Ardbeg Committee – our CRM programme – forges a spirit de corps between 120,000 members in 163 countries. Every communication comes from the Distillery Manager/Committee Chairman and is written in Ardbeg's unorthodox 'Committee speak' tone of voice.

Our collaboration with the ISS didn't just see Ardbeg fired into Space – it fired our imagination as well. We created an unprecedented Space-themed Committee Communications programme to reach out to existing and potential Committee Members (smoky malt whisky drinkers):

The Work

THE FILM

'Ardbeg's gone space aged' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E9qJyuElh2M>

Our film announced the mission and launched the first of our limited edition bottlings, Ardbeg Galileo.

Have a look at the work in closer detail at judgeourwork.com/space.



The Work

EMAILS/SOCIAL MEDIA

Emails invited people to 'watch this space' driving them to ardbeg.com. Throughout the 'Mission' we kept them informed them of progress, events and bottlings. We also asked people to raise a glass to the International Space Station as it travelled over their heads.



The Work

ISLAY INVADERS

We created a game based on space invaders and asked the Committee to defend our distillery from little green men.



The Work

E-CARD

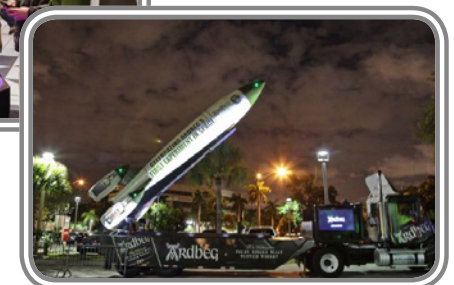
People could also create their own astro-nut e-card to send to friends across Planet Earth.

BLOGGERS PACK

Bloggers were sent a press pack capsule with a miniature bottle of Galileo and a collectable necktag.

THE TOUR

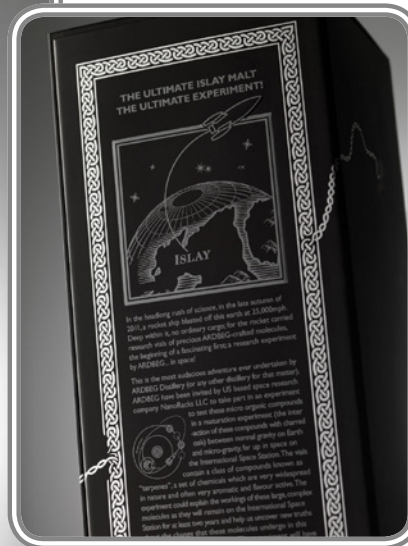
We took a precious vial from the actual space experiment and toured the globe. Our special cabinet displayed the vial floating in zero gravity within. We're not making it up, it does actually float in mid air – how it does it remains a closely guarded secret!



The Work

LIMITED EDITION BOTTLINGS

We tapped into the mystery surrounding the experiment happening thousands of miles away above. Our Ardbeg Galileo and Ardbeg Supernova bottlings celebrated Ardbeg's ambition to go where no distillery had gone before, in one giant leap for the whisky industry – and revealing the maturation secrets of the Universe!



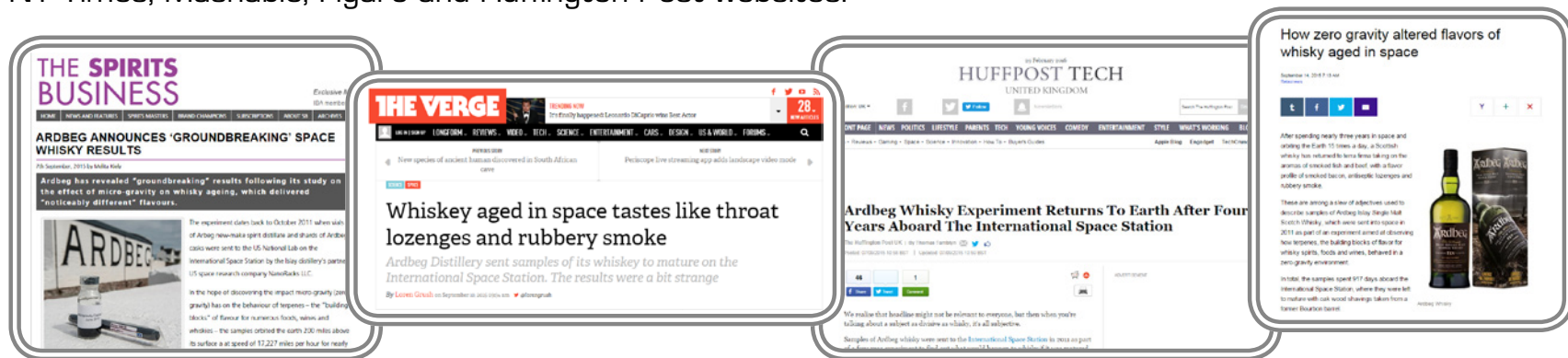
A truly out-of-this-world achievement

The most audacious adventure in Ardbeg's history has had a huge impact on the brand.

Every campaign ultimately drives traffic to ardbeg.com and our online shop. Committee Members enjoy receiving our comms and this is borne out of our sky-rocketing email open rates!

Thousands of people attended our space themed tastings and tour all around the world.

The programme more than achieved its objective to build and increase awareness. There was coverage on the BBC and CNN TV, most major UK newspaper titles and the BBC, Sky News, Forbes, Der Spiegel, NY Times, Mashable, Figaro and Huffington Post websites.



Our limited edition bottlings sold out – Ardbeg Galileo sold out within 48 hours and Ardbeg Supernova sold out in the UK and Germany in under ONE HOUR and in Sweden in under 10 SECONDS.

Finally, in the last 3 years co-incidentally, Committee membership has grown by 38,000.

Final Mission Report - Stratospheric Results!

- Over the course of the programme Committee membership grew from 82,000 in 141 countries to 120,000 in 163 countries.
- Ardbeg Galileo sold out within 48 hours.
- Ardbeg Supernova sold out within 1 hour in Germany and the UK, and in under 10 seconds in Sweden.
- YouTube Space Galileo Film: 24,402 views.

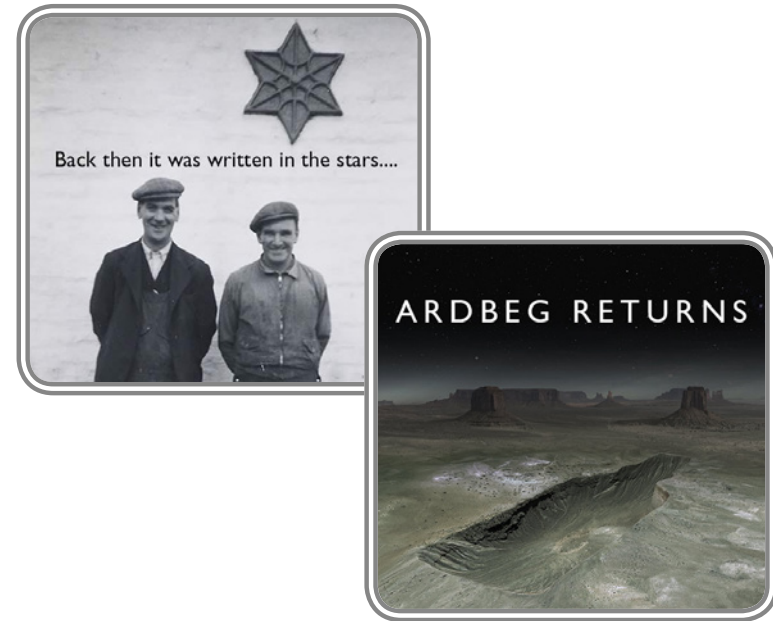
A sample of email data:

Supernova Announcement

Japan: Open Rate: 44.19%. Click through 39.54%
Australia: Open Rate: 43.54%. Click through 17.72%
Germany: Open Rate: 45.59%. Click through 24.77%

Supernova Returns

Germany: Open Rate: 45.81%. Click through 39.12%
France: Open Rate: 30.71%. Click through 44.00%
Japan: Open Rate: 43.33%. Click through 25.38%



Galileo Launch

ROW: Open Rate 38.63%. Click Through 30.38%
Sweden: Open Rate 37.74%. Click Through 15.94%
UK: Open Rate 32.79%. Click Through 36.31%
Asia: Open Rate 41.28%. Click Through 23.21%

Dr Bill's White Paper Email

Japan: Open Rate: 51%. Click through 34.92%
ROW: Open Rate 42.63%. Click through 18.77%
France: Open Rate 37%. Click through 25.12%
Australia: Open Rate 45%. Click through 19.15%

