

## CAANZ Beacon Awards 2016

### Case Study

**Agency Name:** FCB Media  
**Advertiser Name:** NZ Fire Service  
**Gold Beacon Award Category:** Best Communications Strategy

#### *A Burning Issue*

*Despite widespread awareness of the importance of smoke alarms, the NZ Fire Service was struggling with an audience in denial about the actual threat of fire. By making the idea of fire more relevant personally to the audience, FCB Media helped raise awareness and in turn increased checks and sales of smoke alarms and won Gold in the Best Communications Strategy in the Beacon Awards.*

#### Background

Emotive TV positioning smoke alarms as heroes that saved lives wasn't changing the fact many people simply didn't think a house fire was a real threat. Research/insight identified people are in denial about the actual threat of a fire to their own life or home. But with the rise in synthetic furniture, fires are burning hotter and more quickly than ever before. People are dying in house fires, especially in rentals, where 90% of fatal fires occur, yet they're one of the most survivable disasters.

A working smoke alarm is all that's required, but research showed that while 82% of NZ homes had a smoke alarm, in 80% of fires attended, smoke alarms were not working.

#### Campaign Objective

The NZ Fire Service needed FCB Media to help them increase the number of working smoke alarms, measured by an increase in people checking smoke alarms and an increase in smoke alarm sales across the campaign period. Key to this objective was the need to get people to buy into the actual threat of fires.

## Campaign Overview

The problem facing FCB Media was complex and interrelated: people weren't going to believe smoke alarms were important or bother checking them if they didn't believe fires were an actual threat.

FCB Media mapped a new consideration journey that evolved the existing 'smoke alarms save lives' approach to include two new elements:

- Fires **are** a threat to me (addition)
- Smoke alarms are important to save lives
- I'll check it now (addition)

It would be up to media to evolve the approach with a communications strategy that took people on the journey from acknowledging fire as a threat, through to checking their alarms, using the same budget YOY.

## Media Strategy

FCB Media's communication strategy was to take people on a complete journey, using the three steps, from threat to check.

They challenged cases of denial by publicizing fires and confronting people with the reality of how bad fire can be. This was achieved by creating the first national fire ticker with real time fire data updated weekly into banners and leveraging Neighbourly's public alerts (a first for them) to send hyper-localised fire alerts, meaning people were suddenly hearing about fires in their neighbourhood.

The agency also took a disruptive approach by tapping into Kiwis' obsession with real estate and creating 'reality check' house for sale listings in *Herald Homes* (its first 'fake' ad) and on TradeMe's house sales and rental pages. Ads featured images of burnt rooms, for readers to imagine fire devastation in their own home. These listings led to earned coverage across major news sites and featured as a 'Cool Auction' on TradeMe's home page.

The importance of smoke alarms to saving lives was highlighted through emotive TV/video targeting families and renters, but with emphasis on closing the gap between awareness and checking. The media team convinced the creatives to give up a few seconds of emotion to ask 'Have you checked yours yet?'

smoke alarms was increased through multiple digital tactics, including use of time targeted banners and sequential banners with multiple 'did you know?' facts, syncing mobile ads with TV spots to capitalise on multi-screening and prompting checks, creating a digital hub with advice on how to check in 3 easy steps and elevating the importance of checking in rentals by changing TradeMe's listing criteria to include a 'smoke alarm?' question for the first time.

Daylight savings 'check' reminders continued as per previous years (radio/print/digital), with reduced budgets and for the first time no daylight savings TVCs.

## Results

With just over four months in market, FCB Media's insights-led, new communications strategy tackled all stages of the consumer journey around fires and combined for a powerful effect.

Smoke alarm checks increased from 31% to 39%, meaning an extra 123,992 'checked' homes – the highest recorded check measure to date. Smoke alarm sales also increased, with the biggest smoke alarm retailer reporting up-lifts of 112% during launch, where the majority of the media spend was made.

Although the new approach was launched with the same spend as the year prior, it managed to increase frequency, with coverage extended from 10 to 19 weeks.

FCB Media's campaign delivered thousands more 'checked' homes and thousands of new sales, creating the hope of fewer fatalities in future.