

Gold Beacon Award Case Study

Agency:	FCB Media
Advertiser:	Sony New Zealand Limited
Gold Beacon Award Categories:	Best Use of Earned or Owned Consumer Durables
Entry Title:	Message in a Bottle

What better way to demonstrate the purpose and functionality of the new Sony W Series Walkman, which can be worn and listened to under water, than to sell it in its own water bottle. This certainly made a splash with consumers and has won Gold in the Consumer Durables and Best Use of Earned and Owned categories.

Background

The W Series mp3 player and headphone is an incredible category-leading innovation that can be used whilst swimming or partaking in any kind of water sport. It needed to make a splash, but what became apparent early on was the natural scepticism consumers have about electronics and water. They do not mix.

Campaign Objective

The FCB Media team had to come up with a campaign that would overcome disbelief and reassure consumers that water and electronics really can mix. This was needed to ignite sales.

This was not a case of simply publicising the W Series Walkman. The budget was relatively small so any media would have to work hard. This formed the idea to develop W Series own media channel that would speak directly with the core audience.

It was clear that telling people the product was waterproof was not enough to convince them – it needed to be proved to them.

FCB Media's strategy was to dramatise the product in a way that would demonstrate its waterproof credentials to create enough buzz and excitement to earn more coverage than the budget could buy.

Campaign Overview

The humble water bottle became the hero of the day. By placing the W Series Walkman in transparent water bottles, filled with water, FCB Media clearly demonstrated the functionality and credentials of the product in one.

It was clear that the next step was to take this owned-media approach and place it front of the target audience. The focus was on swimmers and water-based athletes.

Media Strategy

Distribution of the W Series Walkman water bottles was crucial. It needed to generate maximum talk-ability amongst swimmers.

The first step was making the bottles a surprise addition to vending machines at pools. The W Series water bottles appeared in the top two shelves of a standard drinks vending machine – the only difference being they vended for \$99 compared with all the other drinks on offer. The outside of the vending machine was W Series branded. This machine was moved around between three key aquatic centres in Auckland. Other media such as decals at the end of pool lanes, changing room eyelines and geo-targeted mobile displays all directed people to the vending machine.

Second, a contra-based public relations programme was used to highlight the W Series Walkman. By offering the water bottle as a reader promotional prize, FCB Media secured valuable editorial space in key publications.

Thirdly, a tightly targeted influencer social media outreach campaign was developed. High profile sports people and a handful of super influencers were sent the bottle to start a discussion about the new W Series Walkman and hopefully endorse it.

Results

The clever use of the ubiquitous water bottle resulted in breaking down barriers around the waterproof mp3 and certainly got consumers talking about it.

This campaign earned more than 500 million opportunities to see the bottle. It was even mentioned by Perez Hilton, Mashable and the UK's Independent, along with securing good local media coverage on TV One's Breakfast show.

Sony was very pleased with the uplift in sales. Targets were smashed - in fact the product sold out in December.

The buzz this campaign created delivered outstanding results and saw the W Series Walkman rise to be the third most popular Sony product.