

Case study

Elephant Family



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Elephant Family is the leading UK conservation charity dedicated to saving the Asian elephant from extinction in the wild. It was founded in 2002 by best-selling travel writer and conservationist Mark Shand, after he rescued a begging street elephant in India.

Protecting elephant landscapes and all the wildlife within, Elephant Family are developing a number of projects in partnership with local organisations across Asia. These involve saving wildlife corridors, safeguarding habitat, preventing conflict, and meeting the needs of both wildlife and people. Elephant Family support this with international campaigning and raising awareness.

Objectives

Elephant Family strive to create engaging and innovative events. Elephant Parade (2010), Jungle City (2011), The Big Egg Hunt London (2012) and The Big Egg Hunt NY (2014) are examples of large scale public art exhibitions that push creative and fundraising boundaries.

[Elephant Parade](#) was London's biggest outdoor art event on record. For two months 260 brightly painted elephant sculptures were installed across London and transformed the capital into a giant outdoor art gallery. The event aimed to raise mass awareness and funds for the endangered Asian elephant.

The Big Egg Hunt UK was a large scale and high profile fundraising event that took over the capital city. This interactive public art event was intended to engage and excite the corporate sector, artistic community and general public alike. The objectives were to create the world's largest interactive egg hunt with 200 exquisitely designed fiberglass eggs by top artists, designers, jewellers and celebrities. These eggs were to be hidden around London in 200 iconic locations with a £1 million+ fundraising target.

Context that prompted action

The Asian elephant is an endangered animal that without action could be extinct in the wild within 30 years. Anecdotally, we knew from our own interactions with the public that the plight of the Asian elephant was largely unknown. The public perception was dominated by the plight of the African elephant and ivory poaching. However the plight of the endangered Asian elephant has been neglected by the press. (African elephant population: c. 500,000 vs. Asian elephant c. 30,000, with 90% of losses occurring in the last 100 years).

We have three decades to save the Asian elephant and needed to think bigger and find a model with the power to capture the public imagination and generate several million pounds from a single event.

Objectives

Through Elephant Parade, Elephant Family aimed to raise £2m from the sale of the sculptures in one-off donations. Regular giving was a new initiative to the charity and financial targets were set at £10,000 for year one. Likewise an average selling price was set at £7,000, this was ambitious target, based on extensive research of similar models (Cow Parade / Pigs of Bath etc).

The campaign had three main non-financial objectives; to engage an audience of non-conservationists, to secure editorial in national and local papers and to dramatically increase the brand visibility of Elephant Family.

Target audience

Elephant Family's public art exhibitions are intended as multi-cultural events that excite and unite the whole city whilst increasing public awareness of the charity. In placing art in all parts of the city we hope to engage everyone local, or visiting.

Process

Elephant Parade was implemented using the charity's existing team of ten people, two interns plus several hundred volunteers. The charity has four departments; Fundraising, Projects, Communication and Logistics which each created a strategy that fed into the overall project plan. The Director of the charity acted as the project manager and held regular meetings to keep the schedule on track and fire-fight problems as they arose.

New ways of working and thinking were necessary for success. Elephant Family invited 16 conservation charities to join forces and become partners in the event. By working together, it was possible to show a united front to the public and strengthen the message that we are all ultimately doing the same thing - saving habitat - whether it's for a tiger, orang-utan or elephant. For the first time, a commercial sponsorship model, delivering marketing and PR benefits was created and pitched to hundreds of businesses across London. Planning permissions and advertising consent was applied for, which involved knowledge of public safety and lengthy paper work. The event was logistically challenging and demanded the ability to direct hundreds of people with military precision. Several key partnerships were formed to meet the needs of the project.

The exhibition took eighteen months of planning and cost £1 million. Business sponsorship financed the exhibition and covered the costs. Elephant Parade was originally intended as a sculpture exhibition of 150 pieces, however as interest in the event grew, it was possible to scale up the event to a 260+ sculpture exhibition.

The scale of the project and modest sized team meant that a flexible attitude, die-hard work ethic and co-operation between the departments were essential to success.

Results

The event captured the public imagination and raised awareness with children, teenagers, tourists and city-dwellers alike. A survey conducted with Elephant Family's charity Facebook site revealed that the majority of this new audience do not visit nature parks or watch wildlife programs regularly which meant we had succeeded in engaging an audience of non-conservationists.

In terms of editorial; four volumes of press were recorded – this included 10 national pieces, 10 quarter pages and 2 full pages in the Evening Standard. A full page article was recorded in The Telegraph along with editorial in Vogue and hundreds of column inches in local, national and glossy magazines. In terms of broadcast media, the campaign recorded 10 hours of TV and radio air time – highlights included coverage by BBC news three times, a two minute slot on News at Ten on the run up to the election and live coverage from the elephant herd for GMTV weather.

Brand visibility dramatically increased as a result of having the Elephant Family logo displayed on over 260 installations across the capital – the public now know us and we are able to trade off the event. Online, the charity Facebook site soared from 2,000 to 16,000 members.

Numerical Results

The sculptures sold for an astonishing £4.1m – double the target and smashed the average selling price record for exhibitions of this nature (for example, Cow Parade).

The regular giving campaign received over £10,000 in regular commitments in year one and more than £13,000 in one-off donations.

- Year 1 ROI of £1.88 and including gift aid of £2.29
- Year 4 ROI of £12.93 and including gift aid of £15.77

When all fundraising streams and expenses are factored in, the event had an ROI of £5. (Cost: £1m, total income: £5m)

The exhibition raised awareness with an audience of 25 million people.

Project Results

Since the end of Elephant Parade new projects have been launched in Asia and funding to existing projects has dramatically increased. The charity has moved a significant step closer to securing one of the world's most important wildlife corridors in Kerala, India. This stretch of land is a vital life line for the world's largest population of Asian elephants on the planet. Funds raised by Elephant Parade have seen Elephant Family become the UK's biggest funder for the endangered Asian elephant. This is great news for Asian elephants, whose numbers have fallen by 90% in the last 100 years.

The Big Egg Hunt UK

- Broke two Guinness World Records including holder for the most participants in an Easter egg hunt with more than 12,000 people taking part.
- Over £1 million raised for charity 7 million people engaged at street level
- 100,000 visitors a day to final display
- 500+ pieces of media coverage
- 1 billion audience reach (Durrants)

"This campaign was a colossal success. It achieved blanket media coverage, engaged hundreds of thousands of people and raised more than £1m for charity"

PR Week

Key points for effective practice

Elephant Parade and Big Egg Hunt London surpassed the charity's expectations and served as a valuable text ground for future events. We have seen the powerful appeal that an outdoor, free, colourful and positive event of this nature. This has led onto further outdoor large scale exhibition in cities worldwide, including Jungle City, Edinburgh (2011) and the Big Egg Hunt, New York (2014). Looking ahead we will continue to work with art and public spaces and will increase the amount of interaction the public can have with these kinds of exhibitions.

Thousands of visitors enjoyed the challenge of spotting the sculptures which has led us to consider the introduction of 'safari' style tours. The appeal and personality of the sculptures can be further brought to life by using interactive technologies such as audio guides and animation, which has been taking up by Big Egg NY, with an interactive app for smart phones to add another dimension to the egg hunt.

Opportunities to grow our supporter base will be maximized in the future with each plaque including a direct invitation to 'join us on Facebook'. Regular giving was a new initiative for Elephant Parade in 2010, which we now have the confidence to boost investment in for future events. The final area is the education programme – the children involved in the Elephant Parade education programme enjoyed the experience and become Asian elephant experts by the end of the event. This will programme will be scaled up in the future, to reach a much greater audience of children.

Conclusions and recommendations

These events have been so successful because it is a fresh approach within the charity sector to raising funds and awareness. It knits together entire cities, from town planners to businesses of all varieties to artists and creative to the public. It is celebratory in style and makes art accessible to absolutely everyone. Using the experience of Elephant Parade Elephant Family developed its own model with The Big Egg Hunt. This is entirely owned by Elephant Family and its profits are 100% charitable. As this model can be franchised. Elephant Family can offer it to other charities as a fundraising tool.

Additional information

www.elephantfamily.org (New York 2014)

www.thebigegg hunt.org (London 2012)