IMAGINATION

1.0 Title Page

Project title:	Shell Eco-marathon Europe 2012
Category:	Temporary exhibition and experiential environments
Client company:	Royal Dutch Shell
Design consultancy:	Imagination
Current date:	24 June 2013

IMAGINATION

2.0 Executive Summary

Shell Eco-marathon challenges students from high schools and colleges to design and build a vehicle to travel the furthest on a litre of fuel or the energy equivalent. It is a tangible expression of innovation - the defining Shell brand value - dedicated to pushing technical boundaries while inspiring young designers and engineers to consider a career in energy.

In 2012, Shell was determined to re-purpose this social investment initiative as a platform for direct engagement with the public. Inviting family audiences along for the first time would raise awareness of energy in everyday life and share the Shell perspective on future energy.

The objective was to re-frame perceptions of Shell and enhance brand reputation, vital to driving value for Shell. The fact that the balance of Shell consumer communication to date relates to its retail products and operations highlights the significance of this strategy.

We were briefed to attract 20,000 public visitors over four days and to engage a global audience through social media - all with a paid-for media budget of less than £50,000.

Our response was The Lab: an attraction-filled experience to complement the track competition and encourage exploration of the world of energy through many different activities.

This attracted 40,000 visitors, a 50% increase on target. Social media reach was in excess of 14m and, crucially, a sentiment analysis showed that 93% of posts were neutral to positive. Generated around 1bn media opportunities with 996 print articles, 90 radio clippings, 2510 online clippings and 14 hours and 22 minutes of footage worldwide - worth £5.7m.[1] Cumulative reach through various media platforms of 4bn.

This new experiential model is being adopted for the three current Shell Eco-marathon events and a new addition to the global calendar, Doha.

(290 words)

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[1] Source: Royal Dutch Shell

3.0 Project Overview

3.1 Project brief

- take Shell Eco-marathon to the next level by opening its doors to the public for the first time
- deliver an experience to inform and educate a general audience about energy, today and tomorrow
- integrate that experience with the competition on the track throughout the event to encourage visitor involvement in the challenges and achievements of the student teams
- generate content for sharing through traditional and social media to reach beyond the immediate event to a global audience
- attract 20,000 visitors over four days, pre-dominantly families interested in energy issues and inspired by innovation, to be measured through IPSOS MORI 2012 unprompted research
- introduce on line engagement to build on relationships initiated at the event
- re-frame perceptions of Shell to create more positive attitudes and enhance brand reputation

3.2 Description

Initiated by a friendly wager between two Shell scientists in 1939, Shell Eco-marathon inspires young designers and engineers to push the boundaries of fuel efficiency.

University, polytechnic and high school teams are challenged to design, build and test ultra-energy efficient vehicles. The culmination of a year's work is the competition on a purpose built circuit - the moment of truth to see who can go the furthest distance using the least amount of energy.

This five day annual event takes place in Europe, The Americas and Asia. Growing in popularity year on year, it involves hundreds of teams and thousands of students.

In 2012, Imagination was tasked with transforming Shell Eco-marathon into a major public event, primarily to help Shell engage consumers in the energy debate, promote stories of Shell innovation to a wide family audience and re-frame public perceptions of the brand.

For Publication

The creation of an entertaining and informative experience to complement the student competition on the circuit presented three particular challenges.

Attract visitors: attitudes to energy multi-nationals in general might well prejudice consideration of a Shell-sponsored event as a great family day out. Potential interest might be compromised by anticipation of a corporate, message-laden and rather 'dry' experience.

To counter this perception, we would have to build wide awareness of the event and what it had to offer within the target family audience - and then deliver on that promise through intelligent, interactive design and content with particular appeal to children. This had to be fun.

Our first response was to run an advertising campaign in local media to drive people online to register for tickets to the live event. At the same time, online activities such as a Facebook game and regular social media updates were employed to drive interest across the global audience.

Visual: Shell Eco-marathon Facebook game

Engage with Shell innovation: getting families through the doors was the first part of the challenge. Thereafter, we had to consider how to engage them in Shell messaging, given this was not an audience familiar to Shell.

How would parents and children, from inquisitive toddlers to surly teenagers, respond to stories of innovation in the oil and gas industry? More to the point, some aspects of the subject of global energy are controversial, a fact of which our audience would be well aware.

The editorial brief for content and tone of voice was critical. We needed to develop a method of communication appropriate to a family audience - sensitive to concerns, doing full justice to the Shell agenda, engaging with people in an honest and direct way, all the while ensuring a balance of information and entertainment.

Reach a global audience: the strategy to open up Shell Eco-marathon to the public needed to be justified with a measurable return on investment. The event had to generate quantifiable improvement of public perception.

For Shell, it had to be a visible embodiment of the company's pledge to 'meet the world's growing demand for energy in economically, environmentally and socially responsible ways'.

To achieve that ambition and the stated target, the event had to have a global reach, becoming far more than an enjoyable day out for local people. This media would have to be earned, as the project received a paid for media budget of under £50,000.

3.3 Overview of market
Rotterdam is the second largest city in the Netherlands with a population of over 600,000 people. The timing of Shell Eco-marathon coincided with a Dutch public holiday when Rotterdammers tend to head for the beaches of Hoek van Holland and Scheveningen. While it would be possible to command the attention of this audience - given Shell is based in The Hague and a local employer - it was by no means certain that attendance would meet the desired target.

3.4 Project launch date
May 2012

3.5 Size of design budget
Total implementation cost - £3.7m excluding fees but including digital software development.
Design Fees – (including 2D and 3D design and copywriting) accounted for 7% of the total budget.

3.6 Outline of design solution

We established several principles to direct spatial and graphic design, content and interaction - anticipating these, in themselves, would present Shell in a new, unexpected light and so start to change brand perceptions.

Learning through play: a family friendly approach would be popular with parents and children. Irrespective of age, the most engaging and memorable way to learn is through exploration and hands-on experiences.

We found inspiration in a science lab - an experimental, innovative location to get involved and learn through discovery. The design of Shell Energy Lab and its content encouraged participation, integrating physical and digital elements to appeal to all the senses.

Putting the emphasis on active fun would promote greater engagement and add value to the visitor experience while allowing us to impart insights into present and future energy issues in a memorable way.

Corporate understatement: as host of the experience, Shell would have a presence throughout. However, this was not the place for a dominant corporate personality. So, within Shell Energy Lab, we made extensive use of the Shell secondary colour palette with judicious use of the iconic Shell red and yellow. Similarly, corporate and technical messaging was re-worked in simple, everyday language to make it accessible to even the youngest of visitors. Brief text was complemented by the introduction of a suite of graphic icons to bring a fresh, appealing idiom to the environment.

Start a conversation: we set out to create a dialogue with Shell on energy where every voice could be heard, no matter how small or young. We did this through drawing - the most democratic form of expression.

Visual: Little girl drawing with light pens

As people were leaving Shell Energy Lab, they were invited to sketch their ideas about energy with light pens. These drawings were captured and curated by illustrators in real time and presented on an Energy Futures Graffiti Wall, a 7,000m2 collaborative canvas.
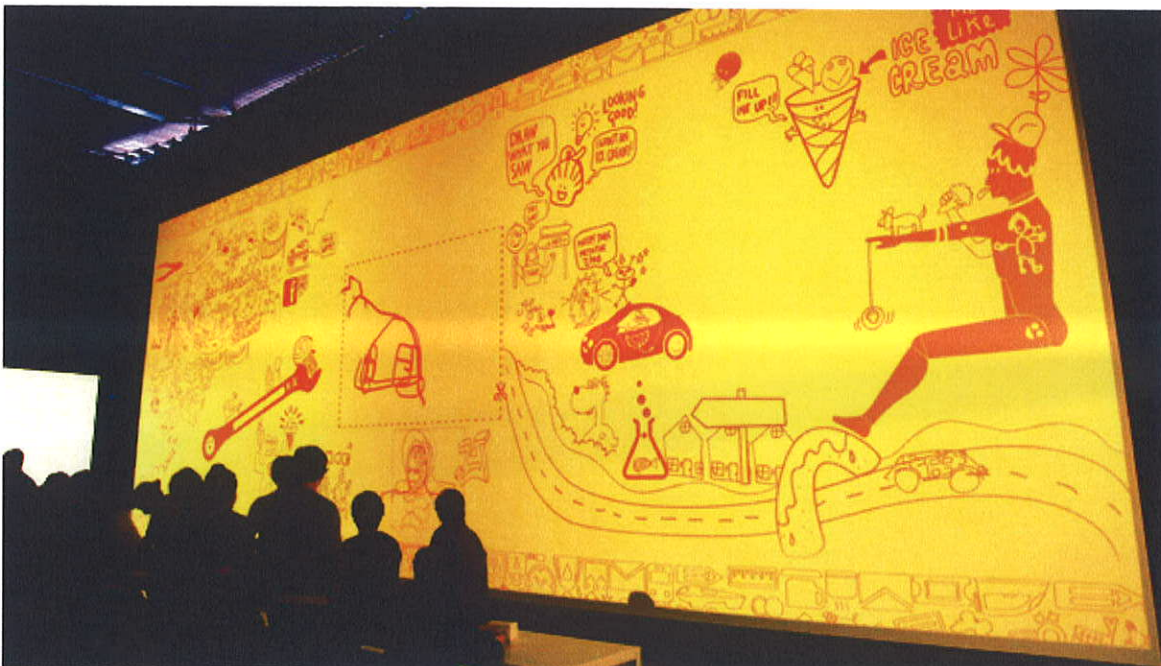
Visual: Energy Futures Graffiti Wall

These rich crowd-sourced illustrations were uploaded to Facebook daily as a printable wallpaper. Individual drawings were uploaded to Flickr, where visitors could download them.

Building a relationship: we added value to the event, for Shell and visitors alike, by encouraging people to re-live the experience online. Everyone received a Lab Pass to swipe at various points to access exclusive content, whether information or images of films. These could be downloaded from a 'souvenir' website back home. Over 45% of visitors took advantage of this facility, generating 90,000 pieces of content.

Visual: Demonstrating RFID

Sharing with a wider audience: shareable content and online activities were designed to take the experience beyond the event. The rich crowd-sourced Graffiti Wall illustrations were uploaded to Facebook daily as printable wallpaper; Facebook also featured an Energy Run game, the screen counterpart of the Shell Eco-marathon challenge.

(448 words)

4.0 Summary of results
4.1 Attendance
An ambitious target of 20,000 visitors was determined, despite the fact the event coincided with a local public holiday when most local residents would be expected to be leaving the city. In fact, attendance comfortably exceeded this target with final figures in the region of 40,000 - a 50% increase on target.

4.2 Measurement methods

Measureable engagement: the use of Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology incorporated into the Lab Pass facilitated data-collection, allowing us to measure how effectively we had engaged the public with Shell's stories of innovation by seeing how much and what content was downloaded and subsequently shared.

Key general public reputation metrics from visitor survey: high attendance would not be a meaningful measure if there was no impact on those who attended. To track the impact of the event, Shell commissioned the independent research agency IPSOS to conduct three main surveys - one online pre-event to establish baseline measures, one face-to-face exit survey to understand the immediate response and one online post-event to understand the lasting impact.

The feedback from the surveys was overwhelmingly positive, all our pre-set targets being exceeded:
- on average, visitors rated their **enjoyment** of the event as an average **7.9 out of 10**; only 5% gave any rating lower than 7 out of 10
- the top three words that visitors spontaneously used to describe their experience were: **interesting** (50%), **fun** (45%) and **educational** (37%)
- nine out of ten visitors (89%) would **speak positively** to others about the event and **85%** said they would go **again** the following year
- 78% of visitors chose to spend **two hours or more** at the event with 20% staying **over four and a half hours**
- crucially, the event had a clear impact on reputation: more than **one in three** (35%) said that attending the event made **their view of Shell more positive**

The event also made positive shifts on a number of specific reputation-enhancing areas when comparing statements about Shell from the pre-event survey with the post-event survey:
- actively addressing future energy needs
- a leader in providing innovative energy solutions
- contributes to the Dutch knowledge economy
- a leader in technology and innovation
- works effectively in partnership with others
- human and approachable
- listens and responds to the needs of customers

In the post-event survey, respondents who were aware of the event scored Shell more highly on **every single one** of the **13 reputation attributes** included on the survey than the total sample did. Source for all data: IPSOS MORI 2012

Social media engagement: the Facebook facilitated 'Energy Run' game, which adopted the design principle of learn through play and the event design style, created a huge level of engagement amongst Shell's community of followers.

So far, over **three quarters of a million minutes** of gameplay have been enjoyed; the game has enjoyed total exposure to over **12 million** people.

The event also generated a large amount of comment on social media channels such as Twitter and Facebook. There have been nearly **400 blog mentions**, over **500 news site mentions**, more than **4,000 Twitter posts**, almost **200 video posts**, over **150,000 Flickr picture views** (and nearly 100,000 shares) and a potential **reach in excess of 14 million** people.

A sentiment analysis shows **that 93% of all posts have been neutral to positive,** enhancing Shell brand reputation. (Source: Sysomos/ Edelman)

Traditional content reach: with content created for a whole range of local, national, regional and global print and TV media outlets, including the likes of Bloomberg and ITV, the estimated total media reach for the event is calculated at over **1 billion** opportunities to see; over 14 hours of television programming has been focused on the event.

Over **4 billion** people cumulatively were reached through the media coverage, representing an overall increase of **135%** compared to 2011.

When you consider the statistics above, which substantiate how awareness of the event enhanced public perception of Shell, the total reputational impact of these figures is significant.

4.3 Internal support at management level as a result

Following the success of the Rotterdam event, Shell management have agreed to roll out the experience model to the other events in the Shell Eco-marathon calendar. The programme will be expanded with the introduction of a further event in 2015.

4.4 External recognition as a result

This is covered within the above sections on media coverage and social media, since almost all of this coverage was 'earned'.

5.0 Other influencing factors

We believe the following factors should be considered when judging the effectiveness of the event:

- total paid-for media budget was less than £50,000
- while it was held in a location relatively close to the city centre, the event took place on a public holiday in a Summer month, when Rotterdam inhabitants traditionally depart for the beach

6.0 Research resources

- IPSOS Shell Global Reputation Tracker, 2010
- Shell Eco-marathon Facebook Page
    - http://www.facebook.com/ecomarathoneurope
- Shell Eco-marathon Facebook Game
    - http://www.facebook.com/Shell/app_381483585197581
- The Lab Microsite
    - https://www.het-lab.com/
- Shell Eco-marathon on YouTube
    - http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL027E2B6D9900A88F&feature=plcp
- Flickr
    - http://www.flickr.com/photos/shell_eco-marathon/collections/
- Web Buzz
    - http://www.digitalbuzzblog.com/shell-eco-lab-the-social-mural-wall/
    - http://www.telegraph.co.uk/motoring/green-motoring/9272915/Shell-Eco-marathon-mega-miles-per-gallon.html
    - http://bloom.bg/L2FZ1n