

Excellence Awards - 2024 Entry
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Entry ID: 15180

Third Party Authorization

Are you entering on behalf of, or in association with, any third party?: No

Basic Information

Category: 03. Consumer Relations Campaign

Entry Information

Entrant company name (To be used in all awards materials/ presentation): Good Relations with Starling Bank

Entry title:

Share The Load

Entry Text:

Brief, Objectives & Budget

Budget: £120,000 (fees and costs)

Starling appointed Good Relations in Spring 2023 with one clear goal: to grow the online bank into a household name.

Since its founding in 2014 Starling had grown rapidly, attracting more than 3 million customers. But it had struggled to shed its 'challenger' status, leaving it at a disadvantage compared to its high street competitors.

So Starling challenged GR to create an earned-first campaign that would:

Generate coverage outside personal finance media, driving talkability and organic word-of-mouth

Drive traffic to Starling's website and build quality backlinks that improve SEO performance

Encourage new customers to open an account with the bank

The Idea, Research & Planning

Starling was founded to 'change banking for good', and has campaigned for greater fairness in the finance industry, notably with its long-running Make Money Equal initiative. But to take the next step to 'household name' status and ensure the brand lived beyond

the personal finance pages, we knew we had to broaden the remit of fairness.

So, when pitching for Starling's business, Good Relations' response centred on asking the nation to 'Care About Fair'. This meant finding new ways for Starling to tackle some of the inequalities and unfairness that affect our daily lives.

And we chose to start with the issue that matters more to us than any other: fairness in our relationships

Strategy, Creativity & Innovation

As anyone who shares a bank account with their partner knows, the need for greater fairness in relationships extends well beyond money.

From domestic chores to childcare, there's plenty of work that doesn't end up boosting our bank balance. And whether it's laundry, loading the dishwasher or looking after elderly relatives, we suspected the majority of this unpaid labour was being picked up by women.

So, after years of campaigning for gender equality in finance, Starling set its sights on tackling the 'chore wars' dividing British households.

Working with Starling's in-house team of developers, we created Share The Load - the very first online chore tracker for couples to calculate and compare their unpaid labour.

Delivery/Implementation of Tactics

To spread the word and get the nation using the tool, Good Relations employed the following media relations techniques:

Research - To show the need for our tool, we commissioned research of more than 4,000 adults in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships. As expected, females reported doing around a third more unpaid labour in their household, with 72% saying they took on more chores than their partner.

Expertise - We teamed up with relationship expert Hayley Quinn to show how failing to share the load of domestic chores could be having a negative impact on your relationship with your partner.

Media event - The Share The Load tool was launched at a live event for a handful of key journalists, who were given exclusive demos of its functionality as well as an exclusive sneak peek of our research results and the chance to discuss it with Hayley and Rachel, Starling's family finance expert.

First-person features - In addition to our news sell-in, two key media titles (Times 2 and MailOnline) were approached to pilot the tool for themselves. Both commissioned writers to test it for a week in their own homes.

Influencer partnerships - Finally, we partnered with real couples across the UK to use the tool for themselves and share the results with their followers.

Measurement, Evaluation & Impact

It seems we struck a chord.

From Gogglebox couples discussing the campaign on Good Morning Britain to headlines professing the tool could 'save your sex life' (disclaimer: it can't), everyone wanted to share their views on sharing the load.

Within just a few weeks, the tool had amassed thousands of users and the campaign delivered handsomely against its original objectives.

1. Generate coverage outside personal finance media, driving talkability and organic word-of-mouth

Share The Load has already generated more than 100 pieces of earned media coverage, almost a third of which appeared in national print, online or broadcast media. Crucially, over 90% of that coverage landed outside of financial titles or sections, hitting key national targets such as Good Morning Britain, MailOnline (three times), The Times (twice) and BBC 5 Live, but also hard-to-reach lifestyle outlets like Hello, Netmums and Good Housekeeping.

When Giles Coren used his Times column to challenge his other half to a 'drudge match' and GMB took to Twitter to get the nation's thoughts on the tool, we knew the campaign had created the organic word-of-mouth we craved.

2. Drive traffic to Starling's website and build quality backlinks that improve SEO performance

At the time of writing, the campaign has driven more than 12,000 click-throughs to the Share The Load tool.

Creating a proprietary tool hosted on Starling's site meant online media had an incentive (or imperative) to link across. Spikes in traffic were driven by earned media coverage, with the three MailOnline articles alone generating a combined 6,000 visits. Direct traffic from influencer content also accounted for thousands more click-throughs.

More than half of the online coverage also included a backlink, including from high domain authority sites like MailOnline, Netmums and MSN. In total, the campaign generated 37 new links from 33 different referring domains, holistically benefitting Starling's overall SEO performance.

3. Encourage new customers to open an account with the bank

In under two months, more than 12,000 people have used the Share The Load tool. And, after tracking their chores, each was invited to click through to open a Starling bank account.

More than 500 have already done so, delivering immediate and measurable benefits for the Starling business.

Supporting Information

Additional supporting information (images, artwork, clippings and other media):

GoodRelationsxStarlingBank-ShareTheLoadSupportingEvidence-CIPRAwards2024.pd f

Campaign image (if entering individual/team awards, upload headshot/team photo here):

Provided

Company logo:

Provided

Please write a 30 word entry summary in the third person:

No other finance campaign captured consumers' imaginations quite like Share The Load. Rooted in a highly relatable human insight, this campaign created conversations and business impact.
