

Keeping Ireland Connected & Supported

An Post #SendLove

We're sending love all over
Ireland, join us. **#WriteNow**

Best Use of TV in a Crisis

June 2021



Starcom

**an
post**

Come Together.
Write Now.
#WriteNow

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Write Now.
#WriteNow

For you

ENTRY DETAILS

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Category

Best Use of TV in a Crisis

Entry Title

Keeping Ireland Connected & Supported,
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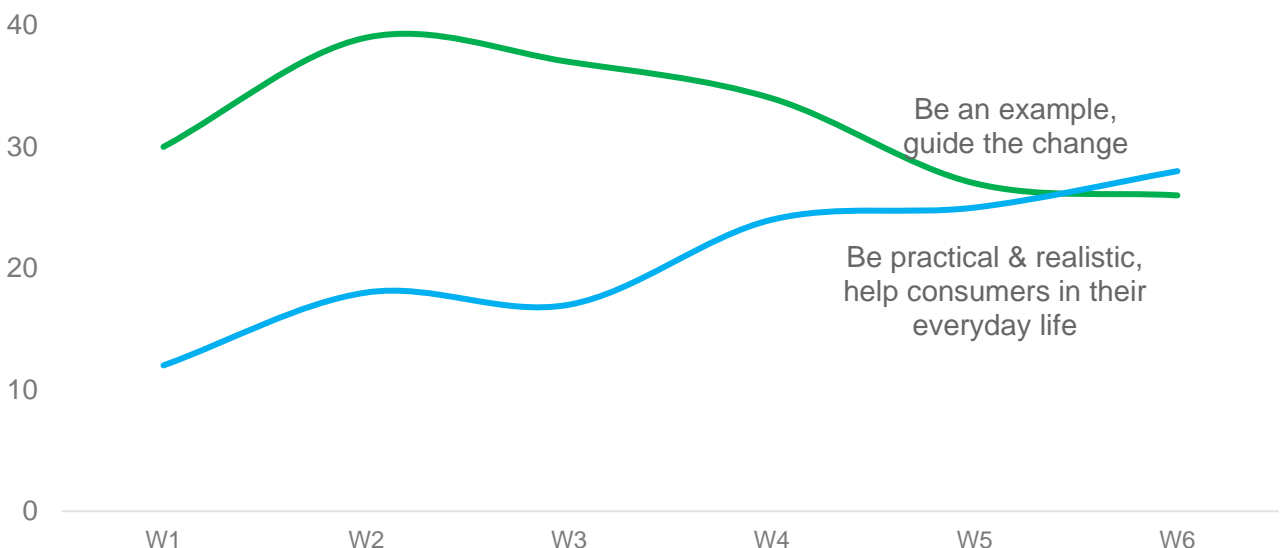
BACKGROUND & OBJECTIVES

At the beginning of 2020, An Post was preparing a major change initiative across the business in preparation for a sustainable future. The Brand had re-launched in 2019 in order to re-establish relevancy, drive consideration and ultimately, deliver increased sales across new business areas.

When the Covid-19 Pandemic brought the island of Ireland to an ultimate stand still in March 2020, An Post acted immediately in order to deliver to the nation in meaningful and valued ways, and help everyone, stay connected. A number of community initiatives and communication pieces were activated, all grounded entirely in the brand's purpose - *to act for the common good and to improve the quality of life in Ireland, now and for generations to come.*

As we move through the Covid-19 pandemic, people increasingly expect brands to truly help them, not just provide information. Brands need to *engage and inspire people*. To reignite their interest in and aspiration to the category, An Post had to first innovate to bring new solutions to keep Ireland connected, not just new ways of communicating their role in society.

How we expect brands to behave:



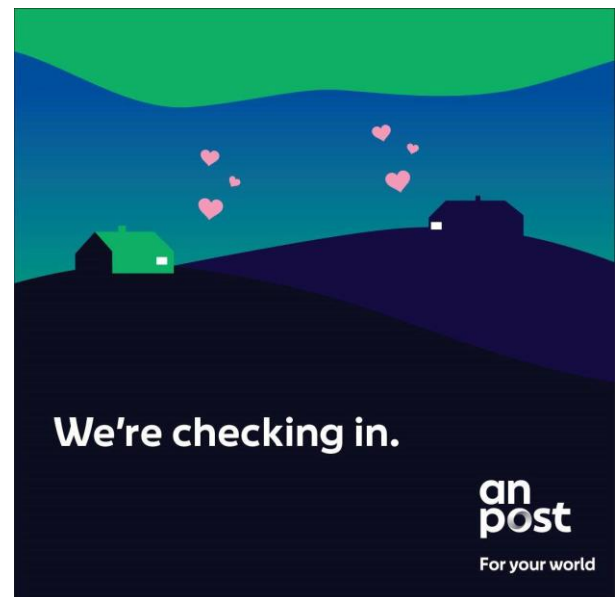
Source: Kantar COVID-19 Barometer – UK data – March to July 2020

BACKGROUND & OBJECTIVES

The **role for media** was ultimately to extend the **awareness and impact** of An Posts initiatives across Ireland. The media campaign was a way to uplift, **keep people connected and directly support** people who need help the most.

In this entry, we will showcase this across the SEND LOVE TV campaign and show how it delivered real results to the community and strengthened An Posts associations with community support, leadership in terms of new products/services and customer-oriented services, (An Post Brand Equity Tracker, Kantar Wave 5 findings).

The Immediate campaign for An Post during the start of the pandemic, was a call to the nation with '**Send Love Write Now**'. While extending this to an always on **Send Love** (Sending) campaign, with the relaunch of An Post's Love Stamp Booklet offer



THE STRATEGY

It was clear **An Post** had a pivotal role to play throughout the crisis, long before **Leo Varadkar's momentous speech on St. Patrick's Day**.

Covid has had a catastrophic effect on people's lives not just the threat to physical health and tragic loss; but the mental health effects of this global pandemic. While Ireland initially rallied together. The start of the pandemic was riddled with fear, and morale at points dipped to historic lows. People's lives were put on hold, they were unable to see their loved ones. The uncertainty of what Covid-19 was, who was at risk?

Weddings were cancelled, holidays and simple social events were taken away.



There had been a building tension: on one hand, people wanting to do the right thing and stay positive; but on the other, feeling fearful or increasingly fed-up. It felt like everything had been taken out of their control.

An Post provided people a way they could actively support one another. In turn a positive supportive message was needed, delivered in media on channels that drive real emotion; and it was quite simple, we wanted people to **SEND LOVE**..

An Post developed a **set of community centered initiatives** to assist the Government in their efforts, helping those most vulnerable while they remained isolated.

The initiatives launched included;

1. The 'Send Love Write Now' Postcard

Sending two postage paid postcards to every household across Ireland. These postcards were used across the nation to allow people to connect with their loved ones during isolation in a tangible way. *The medium was the message.*

1. Community Check-in

A check-in service which allows family members to request to have a loved one who is vulnerable & isolating checked on by a postal operative. As part of this service, Postmasters also collected and delivered all mail.

1. Newspaper Delivery

A free delivery of newspapers. *This initiative involved the coming together of Ireland's media companies alongside An Post to launch this new service.*



During this time, the ask from An Post to **Starcom** was simply put **we needed to reach as many people as possible through media, and to do so quickly – activating from media strategy to execution in a matter of days.** Creating these initiatives took a huge amount of commitment from An Post, but if we did not ensure that people knew about them and helped drive response, An Post's impact would be far lessened.

Our approach was to work with An Post in adapting the existing, carefully developed communications, to ensure they remained relevant in this new world.

'Send Love' is a key communications message for An Post. Which was an evolution of previous campaign message used for Christmas 2019 and was to follow through as an always on piece. The first campaign for An Post's Mails and Parcels business in 2020 was their Love and Marriage Stamp campaign in the run up to Valentine's Day. This was a huge success, with stock level outages and bulk buys for weddings, for what would have been a year full of wedding bells ahead.

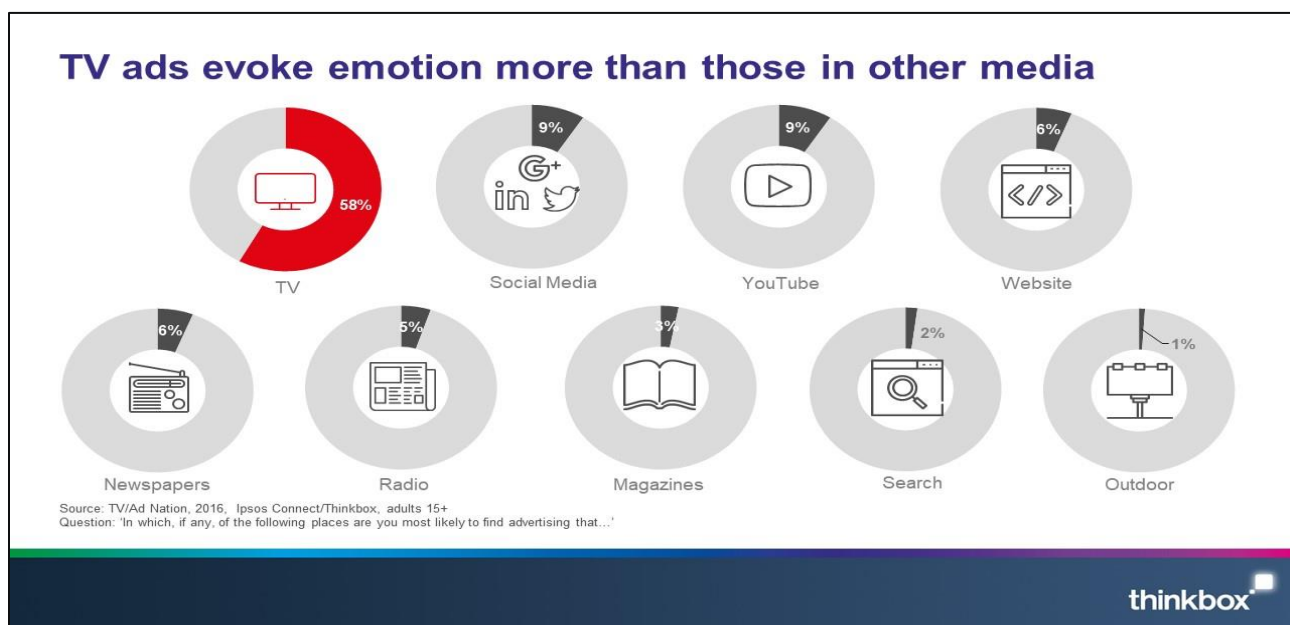
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Changing our plans from March onwards entirely, the 'Send Love Write Now' postcard initiative became an iconic moment for many at the height of the lockdown. The team in Starcom worked hard to **amplify the response to this initiative on social media, further spilling positivity into Ireland's newsfeeds.**

While the Postcard initiative was working well, we knew there was a job to be done to amplify their reach throughout Ireland.

We know from our research and from the below thinkbox findings, that TV advertising evokes strong emotion and connection to viewers, more so than any other media. TV was a crucial and key media for communicating An Posts message to the nation.



With time against us and limited resources in terms of TV Creative. We worked together with creative agency Folk WT, who **created a beautifully animated piece of TVC**, relevant to the tone of the nation.

To execute successfully through media, we widened our audience targeting – continuing to speak to our 'north star' audience segment 'Ciara', a representation of today's modern Irish consumer, while **extending to all adults through traditional and local media to reach the older population.**

THE PLAN

To deliver our campaign during this unpredictable time we had to understand the changing consumer habits. People were no longer commuting into work. Footfall in cities and urban areas was drastically down across the country. As **people's daily routine radically changed**, we saw media consumption follow suit. TV viewership across all audiences increased considerably as people were told to stay at home, which in turn increased viewership particularly across trusted news categories.

With that we **delivered our media where we knew people were**; what they were viewing and what they were listening to. This resulted in us pushing out our SEND LOVE brand message through, VOD, Press, Radio, Social; and **critically, the medium that reaches directly into people's homes – TV.**

For An Post their first port of call ahead of other media going live, was the **underutilised direct mail channel, which delivered the #SendLove postcards to all homes; and was the catalyst for the communications-led impact.**

This was followed and **enhanced social** media to keep the conversations alive – and **ensuring the outpouring of 'love' was extended online.** However, In order to really push our message, TV was the go-to for An Post We needed to maximise reach. We didn't have infinite budget so through close communication with our TV buying team we settled on **65% 1+ at 100 TVRs per week.** We planned and executed a high **frequency of people seeing the ad at least 8 times** across the time that we were live.

We knew there was a strong need to switch our messaging to relevant and timely creative, in line with An Posts executions and community initiatives that were put in place, for Irish citizens. Implementing An Posts new animated and relevant 40" piece of **TV** copy – **We worked closely with Folk WT and our trading team** to ensure deadlines were met and copy reached stations in time for going live on the **16th April.**



THE RESULTS

Since the beginning of the Pandemic, the An Post brand strengthened associations with community support, and leadership. To see such lifts in brand associations of such a large degree is rarely seen. While of course, **media only plays one part of this – we believe it was paramount to the success of the reach and response to An Post’s reaction to the crisis.**

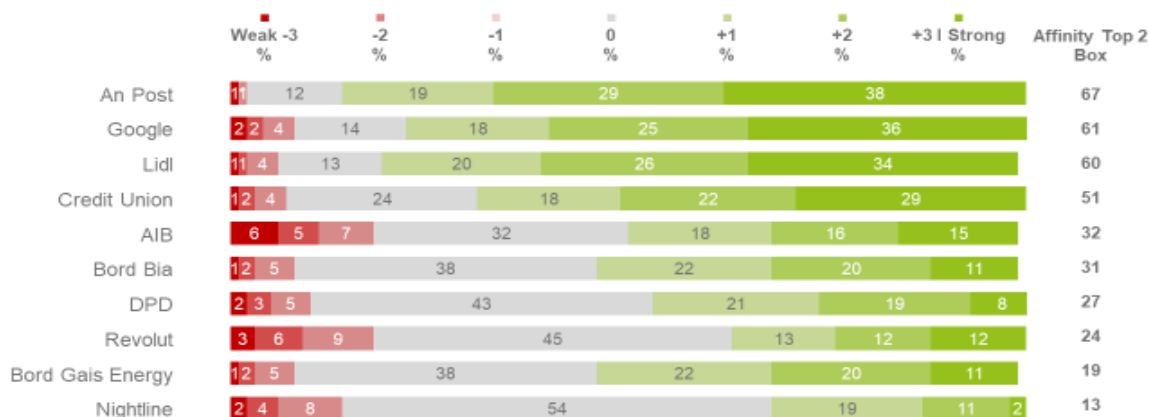
The powerful investment in the brand made during this time, has resulted in positive uplift for An Post. The Kantar Omnibus Survey (August 2020) shows evidence of increased frequency of posting packets/parcels, with most consumers sending gifts to family and friends during the pandemic, while sales in Mails and Parcels are up considerably YOY.

The An Post Brand Equity Tracker has also established:

- An Post was the highest ranked company in terms of overall affinity, based on a competitive set of well-established brands like Google, or even other community-based organisations - Credit Union
- Consumer satisfaction increased across - overall dealings (+6%), and postal (+6%)
- Around two thirds of consumers are aware of the free postcards and initiatives An Post put in place. These initiatives clearly impact positively on brand favourability.

The general public has a very strong emotional affinity with An Post, well ahead of other big brands.

Emotional Affinity vs other well known organisations



THE RESULTS

TV Media Impact

- With TV we reached over 65% AD2544 at least 8 times over 3 weeks. While TV viewership was at its highest, it is important to note that this was **delivered at exceptional value and quality**
- Planned as a mass awareness campaign - any over delivery was welcomed by An Post (+87% over delivery in TVRs), enabling us to utilise added value airtime (due to the market levels) on offer during the weeks we were live
- The Campaign was planned at 30" but copy was ultimately changed to 40", this ensured we were able to communicate An Post Initiatives to the nation during the unprecedented times
- This was a last-minute booking aswell as a start date amendment for TV, with this we managed to avoid any major late penalties
- We engaged people on an emotional level, thousands of people posting photographs of their #WriteNow moments. The campaign itself recorded engagements of over 250,000. **Engagement rates of 8%, 55 times the standard social benchmarks**

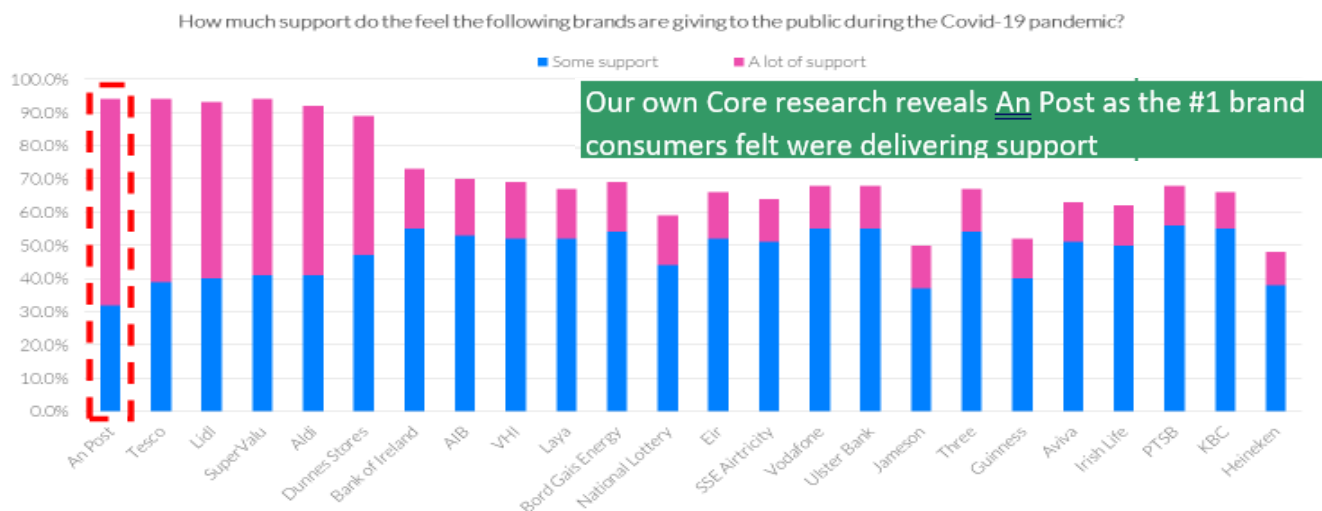


THE RESULTS

- We also had over a million impressions delivered; and half a million completed video across our VOD activity, further utilising the animated TVC
- The campaign also saw **social media from a range of influential figures: President Michael D Higgins, Ryan Tubridy, & Leo Varadkar**, delivered through organic response and PR
- The Chart below taken from our Core Research Practice – shows that An Post was seen as the number one brand for consumers in delivering support during the pandemic

And people see & appreciate the support that brands / companies are providing

core™



Always Moving Forward

THE RESULTS

An Post has recognised the success their initiatives have had on the business. They have also recognised the key role they have played as an organisation to Ireland during the pandemic. Taking all that they have done in a short space of time, **An Post have now created 'Community Focus' - a hub that now hosts nine key community initiatives**, living on the website <https://www.anpost.com/Community>.

All of this demonstrates the dedication An Post has, as a brand to service its community. It also shows the commitment they have made to communities and individuals across Ireland for the months ahead, particularly to those who are most vulnerable.

This time has allowed our team in **Starcom**, in collaboration with An Post's agency partners, to play a critical role in bringing these initiatives to the public. The creation of the Community Focus hub now serves well for us to take many of these reactive media campaigns and propel a long-term proactive media strategy that heroes these initiatives which will continue to be paramount in our recovery of this crisis.

An Post were also delighted with the campaign....*"the start of the pandemic represented a challenge unlike any the Irish public had encountered in recent memory. An Post had a critical role to play to help keep communities connected. We needed to reach as many people as possible, as quickly as possible, with an uplifting and reassuring message. Starcom recommended TV as the key channel. They worked closely with An Post and Folk WT to make this happen for us and we in An Post feel the resulting campaign was a great success."* – Ailish McGlew – An Post, Head of Marketing Communications & Sponsorship

Thank You

THE  **TAMIs**
Ireland's TV
PLANNING
Awards

Write Now
Send Love

