

Lockdown's crazy journey for OFyt and The Crazy Store

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Success can be achieved during lockdown thanks to a longstanding agency client relationship

Lockdown has been an interesting ride. While the wheels came off for so many businesses and agencies, others seemed to flourish. The relationship between agencies and their clients was either challenged or grew from strength to strength during a time of uncertainty. The Crazy Store and its agency partner, Old Friends Young Talent, was one of the latter.



While many were trying to adapt to the 'new normal', it was business as usual for these teams. Rena Engelbrecht, marketing and merchandise executive for The Crazy Store, says constant communication was key. "We continued with our regular status meeting, but moved them online and added additional online check-ins so everyone knew what was on the go, what was expected and how projects were progressing. It was a smooth and successful process for The Crazy Store and OFyt."

During Levels 5 and 4, The Crazy Store was either closed or only partially operating with only 35% of its product offering being available, resulting in two months lost revenue. A saving grace was once the doors were officially opened, loyal customers began to stream in with many requesting that the stores be classified as essential services due to its product offering. Arts and crafts, stationery and toys flew off the shelves and continue to be popular purchases.

The relationship between OFyt and The Crazy Store is steeped in history and thanks to being fully immersed in the business, OFyt regularly tapped into the news agenda for talkability.

The "Unlock the Crazy" campaign was conceptualised in the lounges, home offices and possibly a few kitchens of OFyt's Crazy Store team (the rainbow padlock idea in the campaign actually happened in bed on a cold evening). It launched on

day one of normal trading for the business and celebrated the reopening. Customers were encouraged to bring in their kids rainbow artwork, which was then placed in the store front window, filling them with colour and sketches from loyal little fans.

Tania Barker, creative director at OFyt, says The Crazy Store windows gave smiles to passersby and The Crazy Store customers. "Every rainbow illustrated how much hope there was during the Covid-19 pandemic and the lockdown period. When a rainbow was brought in, the customer was offered 10% off their purchase and their kids got a Crazy Store balloon as a gesture of thanks for their support. Almost 3,200 balloons were handed out. It was a great way for staff and regular customers to reconnect post lockdown and for The Crazy Store to reward loyal customers.

It wasn't always smooth sailing. Many planned campaigns were cancelled and the promotions planned for 2020 were relooked or moved out. Both teams constantly played the 'what if?' scenario game and had to plan for lockdown levels that could change faster than our president could call a family meeting.

During this time, The Crazy Store also moved back to using radio again. "We really benefited from this medium," says Engelbrecht. "It's given our brand so much more exposure and The Crazy Store has been further cemented as a household brand with it popping up regularly in cars and homes now. People have become used to hearing our name and our duck quacking, they are being exposed to our quirky and catchy radio ads and we can definitely see an increase in footfall when we're fighting these ads."

Another massive achievement for The Crazy Store was opening its 400th store on Heritage Day in 2020, no mean feat for any retail brand and during a pandemic.



The business attributes its success in 2020 to its quest to continuously grow and improve its product offering and the

importance placed on understanding their customers and striving to offer five-star customer service. Stores are also easily accessible with a Crazy Store on almost every corner, which is further testament to its understanding its target market, where they are and what they need.

Reflecting on the last year, Paul Newman, CEO of OFyt offers the following advice:

- Always over-communicate, now more than ever.
 - Set up regular check-ins with your team and with the greater teams involved.
 - A short turn around is essential to keeping your creative campaigns relevant – tap into the news agenda if you can and if possible, move resources around in the agency to meet deadlines.
 - Get your customers involved too, you'll be surprised how much your loyal customers care and the enjoyment they get out of being a part of your success.
 - Explore platforms you have not used recently or had never used – radio was key for The Crazy Store and has yielded good results, it's now factored into every campaign.
 - From a PR perspective, offer media access to your clients – Kevin Lennett, managing director of The Crazy Store, availed himself to the media whenever he could. He was transparent about the challenges retail was facing and became a trusted source of information for the media.
 - Track media and follow those influencers religiously – The Crazy Store offered parents tips on entertaining children during lockdown with items they would find in the cupboard and that did not require trips to a store ensuring safety and support for those families.
- And, most important, have fun with your campaigns – instead of a 1.5m social distancing space, OFyt created a 1.5m wingspan and ducks with masks leaning into the fun nature of the client's business.

The Crazy Store's success goes against the theory that you need an e-commerce offering to have been successful in 2020. It comes down to your product offering and relationships across the board: with customers, your own suppliers and your different business partners. That said, e-commerce is on the radar and something they hope to introduce soon.

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