

Publicity Final Report for Corporations in our Heads BC/Alberta Tour 2013
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Materials

When I started my contract in July 2013, as the Publicist for *Corporations in our Heads*, in house Graphic Designer Dafne Blanco had already created the image for the publicity images. The serene head with the butterflies was surreal and beautifully disturbing. The barcode butterfly, in particular, was striking. There was money set aside in my budget for a Graphic Designer, but using in house Graphic Designer Dafne Blanco was the better choice. Having her right next to me spurred the creative process when it came time to create the flyer, poster and programs. With *Corporations in our Heads* being a British Columbia and Alberta Tour as well as having a Vancouver Kick Off and Vancouver Finale, the promotional materials presented unique challenges, such as different locations, community partners, and ticket information.

We decided to produce two different posters. A local Vancouver poster with the Vancouver Kick Off and the Vancouver Finale information, and a tour poster that included a white blank space where the various community partners in different locations could place their own specific event information. This had been done with the 2008 tour of Shattering and it seemed to work well. We ran into a couple of challenges with the poster, the 13X19 size being one of them. This proved to be too big to over print for our sponsors. They found it challenging to place their information on it in a way that looked professional. Dafne, on a few occasions, produced a smaller version digitally and we sent it to them so they could print at their leisure. This was a fine solution, but the posters we had sent them with the blank space did not get used. Dafne also created banners for the sandwich boards for the finale events; in the future we need to be clearer with sponsors on what signage should be placed outside of the venues. The sandwich really helped to steer traffic to the events here in Vancouver. One flyer was produced, which would serve both the Vancouver run as well as the BC/Alberta Tour. It was important to include the entirety of the tour on the flyer. This proved somewhat challenging for our Outreach Coordinator Liza Lindgren, as it was difficult to secure sponsors and venue information during the summer months before our August 21st print deadline (we pushed the print deadline a week to give us more time). In the future, I suggest a blank space on the flyer as well, just as we did for the poster, the typical size of an easy label would be best. Their specific community event info had a tendency to get lost within the information of the whole tour.

Printing

For future printing of promotional materials I suggest working with Brian Benson from RR Donnelly and/or Rick and Melanie from Image West. They are total professionals and produce great results in a timely manner. It is worth nothing I also got a great quote from Pippa Seymour from Quality Printing. She is also someone I would go to for future projects.

*This time around we chose to work with a company called Rayacom as Dafne had worked with them on a project in the past. The product that was produced was great; however

there was we waited for the materials to arrive much longer than we had anticipated. It caused us to have to pay extra to rush out the materials to Vancouver Island so they could begin to promote the events. We were quoted 5-7 business days and in our experience that is including proofing. For them the 5-7 (or 7-10 as it was later changed to) began after proof. Those extra days caused a lot of undue stress while waiting. Vernon Wong, one of the Managing Partners, took on our file at the end to help sort everything out and we did receive a discount that covered our extra mailing costs.

In order to figure out numbers, as in how many posters and flyers we needed to order, we first checked in with each community partner to ask them how many of the flyers and posters they thought they would need. Based on this we decided to order 35 000 flyers and 2500 posters (1900 were the tour poster with the blank space and 600 were the Vancouver poster with the Vancouver information). For the 600 Vancouver posters I sent out 200 for the Kick Off, as it was 2 shows. For the Finale we then had 400 to use and between Liza and myself that went fast. I think we could have used 200 more of the Vancouver poster and 200 less of the tour poster as we still had some of the tour poster left. In order to utilize those for the Vancouver Finale events, Dafne made labels for the specific Vancouver locations and placed the labels in the white blank space. Liza then sent those out to those specific locations and asked them to poster.

Media Sponsorship

My first goal for media sponsorship was CBC. I contacted Communications Officer Lien Yeung with sponsorship requests. She responded to let me know it is now Asifa Lalji in that position, whom she copied on the email. Asifa, while very supportive of the project, replied back that CBC could not take on this sponsorship at this time. She did offer to disseminate the press release throughout CBC and was keen to help us get coverage. I also approached Rabble.ca, as I thought this project would be a great fit for an alternative media source. The Editor, Derrick O'Keefe, who responded that he was interested in sponsoring but at that point we were about a week away from opening the project and it, was too late. I however booked a leaderboard on Rabble through Publisher Kim Elliot and she put me in touch with writer Tania Ehret. Tania was a great support and produced two pieces on the project; see information in coverage. I approached Laura Moore from the Georgia Straight as well as Vancouver Co-op Radio and they were both happy to sponsor, so the Straight was our print sponsor and Co-op Radio was our media sponsor.

The Straight gave us a great package deal that included; 3 G2 (5.84" wide x 4.82" high) size ads, with one spot color (we chose red which looked great and really stood out on the page), a Big Box (300 x 250 pixels and was up Nov 24-Dec 6) on website for 50,000 impressions, and a Blog Posting for 1 week (went up Dec 1st). The total value was \$6,611.00 and the total net cost was \$2,000.00=savings of \$4611. The distribution of the Straight makes it way out to other location on the lower mainland as well including Squamish, Surrey, Chilliwack, Langley and most likely other areas in BC as well. Laura was great to work with, as was Maya Beckersmith, her new assistant.

For Vancouver Co-op Radio I worked with Viveca Ellis (Membership Services) and Eirene Cloma (Outreach Coordination). The sponsorship was at no cost to us and the terms and

details were:

Partnership Start Date: Oct 3

Partnership End Date: Dec 8

Co-op Radio will:

1. Produce and broadcast pre-recorded announcements promoting the October and December Vancouver dates. ***I provided them with the copy and the music for the PSA.***
2. Assist with booking two interviews on Co-op Radio programs regarding project. ***Eirene and I both liaised and chatted about suggestion. We secured 6 interviews with Co-op Radio. See coverage for more information.***
3. Promote the event on Co-op Radio's website and social media.

Theatre for Living will:

1. Provide script and music for pre-recorded announcements.
2. Publish Co-op Radio logo on event related material. ***See logo on promotional materials.***
3. Publish a Co-op Radio ad in event program. ***See ad on the back page of the event programme.***

I was quite happy with our media sponsors and their support. For future tours a sponsor that has national or provincial coverage is suggested.

Distribution

Poster and flyer distribution for the Vancouver run went in two waves. The first was for the Kick Off and the second for the Finale. For both waves I utilized the help of Harry Wong, an amazing volunteer, which distributed posters to community centers and libraries. I also enlisted the help of Perry "The Poster Guy" Giguere to poster the commercial areas. For the Kick Off 200 posters went out. There were 100 for Harry and 100 for Perry and 500 flyers each. For the finale there were 400 posters left, 200 more went to Perry and 100 to Harry. 300 went to Liza for outreach purposes. Liza sent the posters to all of our community partners in Vancouver; Gordon Neighbourhood House, Gallery Gachet, Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre, SFU Harbour Centre and Café Deux Soleils. Liza also sent out bundles to students in places such as UBC, VCC and so on and I put up posters while at Capilano. In total \$583.80 was spent on poster/flyer distribution. This price also included 2600 flyers. With the size of the poster being 13x19 instead of the usual 8x11, the price went up. With a run of seven shows in Vancouver this felt like quite a bit of money to spend on poster distribution and in the future I would reach through more volunteer channels. Harry distributed 200 posters and around 1000 flyers. It is worth nothing that with the timing of this production (Oct and Dec) students were right in the middle of exams and as a result securing student volunteers was challenging.

35000 flyers were purchased for the Vancouver run as well as the BC/Alberta tour. We

kept 6000 for Vancouver, which with a run of 7 shows, that would average out to around 857 flyers distributed for each night. We were left with 29 000 for the tour, averaging on around 1318 flyers for each place. This number is only an approximation, as different communities bases on size needed more or less promotional material. What the community partner asked for in flyers and posters we usually gave them anywhere from 10 more posters to 100 more flyers or more for each place, depending on what we thought they could handle.

Mailing and Distribution

For each community we sent the requested amount of posters and flyers about 6 weeks ahead. This would give them time to do two waves of promotion, as posters and flyers get taken down. With the nature of a tour and the prospect of unexpected costs, I budgeted \$2000 for mailing and distribution. The actual cost came in at almost \$700. Way less than expected this was hard to be able to discern at the beginning of the tour.

Dropbox

Liza and I used Dropbox as a way for our sponsors to access the Publicity Kit and any other useful materials when needed. This seemed to work well for the most part. Included in the Publicity Kit was: Save the Date E-vite Template, a list of ongoing coverage and quotes, the Corporations artwork, up to date headshot of David, outreach email template, event listings template (for long and short), photo for print material done by Tim Matheson, poster copy template, press release, rsvp list template, and a social media information document. All of the press materials were fill in the blank.

Social Media

Amanda Konkin the previous Publicist set up a great social media following for me to step in to. Our Twitter was useful for me to connect with our community partners and media in each place. I also spent time tweeting at different organizations about the events in their communities. Liza and I both targeted specific organizations on Facebook and asked them to lend support and not only send out information in e-blasts but to post the events on their pages. I set up the *Corporations in our Heads Vancouver/BC/Alberta* Facebook page and we asked each community to set up their own specific Facebook page as well. As the tour progressed we asked each community partner to send the Facebook event link. We would then add that link to our event page so that all of the information was in one place. We asked that when creating the Facebook event they made sure to specify the location in the title. This was to avoid confusion.

As a part of the Publicity Kit I also included a social media roll out document. We chose the Twitter hashtag #corporations2013. Social media was more prevalent in some communities than others. For future I would lay out a fool proof social media plan and include it as a part of their contract in regards to Publicity. Social media is a powerful tool when used properly and is a great way to directly connect with people and have some fun at the same time.

Twitter was a great way to see the connections happening in regards to the project and who was following what. There were times I was taking rsvps for the Vancouver events through Twitter! We used Facebook to share experiences throughout the tour and to promote the locations that we were heading into next. We also used it to post any media such as articles or reviews. To target the Vancouver Finale run I also ran a Facebook ad campaign from Nov 28-Dec 8 which resulted in 196 390 impressions, 122 clicks and 108 unique clicks. I budgeted to spend \$110 and spent \$97.10 in total. I maintained the blog that had been set up by Amanda. I did strategic blog posts; Intro/Inspirations/Tour Kick Off, Vancouver Kick Off, Vancouver Finale and Conclusion.

Advertising

With only 7 events in Vancouver it was not advantageous for me to run the traditional amount of ads for a typical main stage production. I chose The Georgia Straight (see in Media Sponsorship), The Vancouver Courier, The Metro and eventually The Westender. There were others along the way as well. See bullet points below.

- I began by placing an ad in the 90th issue of Geist Magazine. Geist is a great alternative arts magazine and with it being the 90th issue we were given one ad size larger for the same price.

-For the Vancouver Finale I took out a preview on Vancouver Plays from Nov 25-Dec 8. As this was not the usual 6-week placement I was charged \$45 instead of \$60. Jerry Wasserman from Vancouver Plays also came to the Gallery Gachet-see information in Coverage.

-I applied for Transit Shelter placement. I was unsure, as to whether or not we would receive it, as lower priority is given to runs shorter than 3 weeks. We were, I am pleased to say given 10 faces over a period of 2 weeks from Nov 25-Dec 8 for the Vancouver Finale. The usual ad space for this would have cost \$12, 500. For printing I used Image West and spent \$604.80 in total. That is a savings on ad space of \$11 895.20. The most notable locations for these were Commercial and Adanac, West 41st and Collingwood, and Slocan and Kingsway.

-I decided to run an ad campaign with Cineplex in their Tribute magazine for the month of October that would target 13 out of the 22 communities on the Corporations in our Heads tour. Matt Watson gave us a discounted rate for a full color full-page ad. While it looked beautiful it was not the right choice for this particular audience. Money would have been better spent on placing individual ads in community papers as well as ferry and bus terminals. I originally approached Cineplex to discuss placing the ad on screens but it was quite expensive.

-I worked with Bruce Beil from Metro News and he gave us amazing deals. He is also the Ad Rep for Metro News all over BC and Alberta as well as Vancouver. We placed 8 ads in total for \$2000, 4 for Vancouver (one for the Kick Off and three for the Finale), 2 for Calgary and 2 for Edmonton.

-Put up listings with the GVPTA. Jim Peskin gave us the Advanced Listing for the Basic price. We paid \$40 instead of \$75. He also came out to review the event. See information in coverage.

-The Westender decided to do one Hot Tickets Issue per week all the way through December and, to promote the last 4 shows, I decided to place a Finale ad in the Dec 5th issue for a discounted rate.

-Publisher Kim Elliot at Rabble.ca was great. We ran a high traffic leaderboard on the Rabble.ca website for 6 weeks (the duration of the tour being Oct 16-Nov 30). The ad was geo- targeted for only those in BC and Alberta. The CMP rate (cost per impression) worked out to around \$26 and the estimated minimum impressions was 57 692. In total the leaderboard cost \$1356. That included a 20% non-profit discount that worked out to a savings of \$300.00. When the campaign was coming to an end I asked Kim how much it would cost to keep the ad up until the end of the Vancouver run of Dec 8th and she kept it up for an extra week at no extra cost to us.

-Manon Paradis from The Vancouver Courier was a great support again for this project and gave us great deals on ads. She also passed on our press release to the Editorial Department. For a total of \$945 (including tax) we ran 4 ads (including one in the Centre Stage Fall Preview Issue). She offered to reserve space for us in the Valley papers for the Abbotsford, Chilliwack Times and Langley Advance and gave us great rates. I would suggest, if possible, doing this in the future.

-I also connected with Programmer Frazer Andrews at Theatre Alberta who is also the Editor of All Stages Magazine. All Stages was not able to pick up *Corporations*, as they primarily concentrate on Alberta companies, but he connected me with Marketing and Communications Coordinator Aaron Talbot for advertising. Aaron charged us the non member Playbill Posting Fee of \$25 and the Alberta tour information went out on the Theatre Alberta website, the Classifieds, Theatre Buzz, and The Playbill. If touring through Alberta in the future I would contact Aaron earlier to also check in about advertising in the All Stages Magazine.

Coverage

We received 7 Vancouver reviews, 30 print/online articles (tour and local), radio interviews, and a few televisions as well. I am going to break it down into the notable coverage for local and tour below. It is worth noting that television was the tough medium to nail down, as we didn't really have footage to give them. With there being no cast and no script, there was no media call. What we did have was the *Corporations in our Heads* video filmed and edited by Dima Alansari. Footage from that was given for B roll if requested.

Notable Local Coverage

With no script and no idea what content was going to hit the stage each night this was a

project that mainstream media was hesitant to pick up. With that said, we received positive reviews from supportive media. Reviews included; Jim Peskin from the Greater Vancouver Professional Theatre Alliance, Betty Gilgoff from British Columbia for Peace and Global Education, Julia Siedlanowska from the Other Press, Lauren Kresowaty from niftynotcool (participated on stage), Tania Ehret from Rabble.ca, and Culture Vulture David C. Jones (participated on stage). Something unique for the finale was a live tweet along of the event at Gallery Gachet. Allyson McGrane, from Plank Magazine, attended and live tweeted her experience of the evening. I sat her at the back and asked David to inform the audience that she was tweeting and that we were aware. With the nature of events like these, social media is a powerful way to tap into the ephemeral moment. In the future tweet seats are an idea to be considered. Jerry Wasserman from Vancouver Plays attended the Gallery Gachet show as well but was unable to write a review due to timing. We asked for permission to use this quote below:

"I enjoyed the Corporations show. Theatre for Living offers a valuable service, giving people a chance to act out their ideas and frustrations about social issues, not just speak out about them. It helps create a theatrical vocabulary for articulating the way we feel about important things in our lives."

Kevin Hollett, now the Editor in Chief, of Megaphone Magazine was unable to cover the Kick Off but put me in touch with Megaphone Reporter Alexandra Bogren. Alexandra did a mid-point interview and article. The timing of it was such that it gave a solid glimpse into what the experiences were so far while previewing the upcoming Vancouver Finale. Alexandra also attended the SFU Harbour Centre Dec 7th event. Tania Ehret from Rabble.ca also wrote a really great mid point/preview article that included an interview with David and then also wrote a review after attending the Dec 4th event. Monica Miller from SFU The Peak interviewed David before the Kick Off and then attended the October 10th event. The article came out the week before the Finale, which was timed well to promote the SFU event in particular. A great new contact was made in Freelance Writer/Blogger Jarrah Hodge. I found her name as a part of the Media Democracy Days and sent her the information. While she was unable to attend the Finale, she offered to post a write up about it on her Gender Focus Blog. I wrote the blog and it was posted that day. I connected with Katherine Dodds, the Founder and Creative Director for Hello Cool World, and we did a cross promotion in regards to the Vancouver Finale of *Corporations in our Heads* and the 10 Year Anniversary in January 2014 of their documentary film *The Corporation*. The cross promotion included social media as well as an e-blast. For the week of the finale we were chosen as the Straight Choice in the Georgia Straight, which included a great write up about holiday consumerism.

With Vancouver Co-op Radio as one of our media sponsors and a solid previous relationship with many of them, 6 interviews were secured. The interviews took place Media Mornings (2 interviews-one for the Kick Off and one for the Finale), Bulland Awaaz (Kick Off), It Takes a Village (Finale), Redeye (Finale) and Kla How Ya (Finale). The most in depth interviews were Media Mornings and Redeye. Vancouver Co-op Radio also played a PSA leading up to the Kick Off and the Finale. For other Vancouver radio, David did an interview for the Bill Goode Show for CKNW and Sheryl McKay from CBC North By

Northwest, while unable to cover the show, did short plugs on the weekend of December 7th and 8th for the two final shows.

Honorable Mentions

- Basya Laye from the Jewish Independent wrote a short about the project and tried to secure a writer to come to the Vancouver Finale.
- Aaron Alexander from BC Buzz also tried to secure coverage but was unable due to other events but is a great contact/source for the future.
- Manjot Bains from Jugni Style tried to find someone to cover the finale but was unable.
- Mark Leiren Young, while supportive of the project, was unable to cover it due to time constraints.

Notable Tour Coverage

Matt Watson from the Calgary Media Co-op was very supportive before and during Corporations in our Heads. He interviewed David for a podcast that was co-produced with AlternativeMediaYYC.com and the Arusha Centre before Corporations in our Heads had even kicked off and re-posted the podcast when it came time for the Calgary shows on November 9th and 10th. He also wrote an article for Fast Forward Weekly previewing the Calgary events. Saanich News in Victoria wrote a great article that included an interview with David; Editor Don Descoteau did this. Julie Chadwick from Nanaimo Daily News jumped in with both feet and not only wrote an article and interviewed David but was also very active on social media as well. Banff had great media including an article in the Crag and Canyon and Canmore Leader done by Justin Parsons that included interviews with two of the community partners, Kim Bater and Diana McRoberts, as well as a radio interview with Kim Bater done by Rob Murray on Mountain FM. The Banff event was cancelled, which was quite disappointing based on the coverage that was done. The organizers in Hazelton did a great job of connecting with local media and secured an interview with Jerome Turner from Hazelton/Interior News and then I scheduled the interview with David. This sort of interaction worked well between the organizers and myself. Competition in Edmonton is always fierce and touring shows have a hard time finding their way in to the media coverage. We were chosen for the Top Ten To Do in the Edmonton Journal for the week of October 31st and Paul Blinov from VUE Weekly did a great article and interview with David as well. We had quite a bit of media support in Kamloops. Glenn Hilke, our community organizer there, played a big part in this. We secured two interviews with Mike Youds from Kamloops Daily and one with Dale Bass from Kamloops This Week. Doug Herbert from CBC Kamloops Daybreak received the press release and gave me a call to schedule a pre-recorded interview done by Shelley Joyce that played the morning of Friday November 22nd. The interview went well but we were unable to obtain a link for archival purposes. Katie May from The Lethbridge Herald called to chat with me and that article made the front page. Kristi Patton from Penticton Western News wrote an article after interviewing David. The Nelson Star previewed the event in the paper and Writer Sam Van Schie wrote an article including an interview with community partner Marya Follinsbee. It is important to note that at this point in the tour I started to push the community partners more to take on interviews as David's tour schedule could be complicated at times with travel, check ins and sleep. It was important to have the community partner speak directly as to why they took this project on, and why they wanted to bring it into their community.

The Langley event was a great example of this. Their event happened to fall on the same day as “Black Friday” and “Buy Nothing Day.” This was an angle that was useful and Heather Colpitts from the Langley Advance really took it to the next level in her coverage. She spoke to community partner Barb Nelson and included corporate slogans such as, “Give like Santa. Save like Scrooge,” as a part of the article.

Conclusion

For future tours I think it is essential to have at least 2 members of the community working together with a solid group of volunteers, one person to take on community outreach with the Tfl Outreach Coordinator and one person to take on publicity with the Tfl Publicist. It would be even better if each one of them has a volunteer assistant that they can delegate to. When coming together over Skype or phone, the attention can then be more focused on the specific tasks and goals needing to be completed to help the event be a success. The communities that received the most in depth coverage were the ones where we all worked together in tandem and the lines of communication stayed open. It is important that we, at Theatre for Living, remain supportive while allowing the community partners to take ownership of their event. The timing of this tour was an interesting challenge as well. The energy was high during the Kick Off but as we neared the holidays it became challenging to not only secure coverage but to also stay in contact with community partners. Christmas events began to take over priority for coverage and for time. There was an angle that we were able to take and this was, “Do you need a break from the impending holiday consumerism?” The media that were supportive were really invested and excited in this unique process but as I said before media were quite overloaded with holiday events and holiday themed shows. I think with a unique project like this it was also paramount to find sponsors that would be completely engaged in the process and the project as a whole. This was a different project to promote and it was strongest when all cylinders were firing as a team. The audience experiences were great and we had really strong feedback throughout. As soon as quotes came in we placed them on emails, outreach and social media. There were many audience members including media wanting an actionable item to come away with. With the nature of this type of event and the work that Theatre for Living does, it is not about telling you what to do or think to take away. Hopefully discussion begins and you leave with a different perspective on your own relationships with corporate messaging in your own life, but what one person leaves with is vastly different from the next. What we realized after the tour completed was that a brand new technique had been formed and this subject matter was quite frightening to some people. *Corporations in our Heads* is now a stand-alone workshop that David can take out to different organizations. This is a massive accomplishment. Many topics rose up, there was much laughter, a few tears and gratitude. As a Publicist this type of project has unique needs and much was learned.