



**Client:**

Headlines Theatre

**Campaign:**

Us and Them (the inquiry), October 22 to November 29

**Project:**

- To help raise awareness about Headlines Theatre's latest project, *Us and Them (the inquiry)*, by securing local media coverage.
- To assist the Outreach Coordinator with promoting different shows to relevant target audiences.

**Challenges:**

- 1.) Previous publicist only took care of media ad buys so there was no media kit prepared for the project.
- 2.) Missed deadlines for community calendars with important local television channels.
- 3.) Insufficient lead time for mainstream media outlets including print dailies/weeklies/magazines, and TV.
- 4.) The conceptual nature of the project made it difficult to pitch to journalists who were looking for concrete details such as plotline, and a consistent venue/schedule.
- 5.) Difficult to come up with story angles because there was no guarantee that a specific performance will tackle community partner's issues.
- 6.) Highly intimate engagement and sensitive stories made video or photo coverage impossible. Photos from opening night were virtually unusable.
- 7.) Website is hard to manoeuvre, and information on the project was not easily accessible to visitors.
- 8.) Weak social media infrastructure left by previous publicist meant that the Facebook and Twitter page of Headlines Theatre did not have a large following. A strong social media presence could have helped get the word out instantly to target audiences and build buzz on shows.

**Strategies and Solutions:**

Headlines Theatre's work has traditionally appealed to a politically astute, well-educated demographic who engage in social and environmental activism. The project's partnerships with various community and non-profit organizations provided an opportunity for an intimate community engagement strategy, where target audiences received information on the project through organizations they were affiliated with, and word-of-mouth.

Since there was insufficient lead time to pitch to mainstream media outlets, focus was directed towards pitching stories to community, student, online, and independent media. This outreach effectively reached target audiences who were already aware of/supported Headlines Theatre or were interested in the community partner's issue and area of work.



**Results:**

Over a 10 week period, *Us and Them (the inquiry)* was featured in 47 unique media outlets, 21 of which are feature articles/interviews. All features were written in a highly favourable, positive tone with strong recommendations for readers to attend the shows. Radio interviews were also positive with long audience exposure, with interviews lasting from 30 minutes to 1 hour. Online event listings were also positive, with 75% of entries containing two to three paragraphs on the show written like an article. All media outlets that featured *Us and Them (the inquiry)* targeted relevant audiences effectively due to the nature of their readership, distribution, and reach.

**Recommendations:**

- Plan features in magazines, TV, and Radio before and during the 2011 show run 6 months in advance
- Purchase radio ads and announcements
- Purchase a weekly ad run in the Georgia Straight
- Approach widely circulated free dailies for media sponsorship (e.g. Metro or 24Hrs)
- Send entries to TV community calendar listings 2 months before 2011 show run
- Produce a 3 minute EPK, and a 1 minute online video for the play
- Professional photos for Headlines Theatre staff and board
- Website re-design and re-branding for 30<sup>th</sup> year anniversary – this will help improve and expand Headlines Theatre’s fan and follower base
- Professional photos for Us and Them (the play)
- Host activities that will drive traffic to website and increase Facebook and Twitter followers (e.g. contest, give-aways, etc.)
- Improve audience engagement with student population both on the high school and university levels
- Try to get bus shelter ads to run a week before the show opens