



AMEC Communication Effectiveness Awards 2009

Sense and Measurability

Company Name: Media Measurement (MML) Client/Campaign: Sense
Category: Best Use of Media Evaluation: Not-for-Profit

Objective/Brief:

Sense is the leading national charity that supports and campaigns for children and adults who are deafblind. They provide expert advice and information as well as specialist services to deafblind people, their families, carers and the professionals who work with them¹.

Sense had previously undertaken media evaluation; however, it approached MML as it was able to offer Sense greater insight into what lay behind its facts and figures through the use of more meaningful indicators and KPIs than had been the case in the past².

Sense planned to use the evaluation MML provided to help it meet three objectives:

- 1) To evaluate the effectiveness of the current PR strategy to enable Sense to improve the way in which it managed its PR resources.**
- 2) To champion the cause of deafblind people more effectively to its external audience through the media by moving away from passing mentions, and increasing beneficial coverage and Core Message penetration.**
- 3) To secure stakeholder buy-in and increase the visibility of the PR Department internally so it could begin to contribute to wider organisational goals.**

Strategy:

When MML met with Sense two members of staff from the PR Department worked closely on the London Marathon, in which Sense encouraged people to support its cause. MML focused on this key area of PR activity and decided to begin monitoring effectiveness in this area. To achieve this MML began tracking, not just the specific campaign event messages, but all messages which the media reported on. This would enable Sense to understand what proportion of its coverage related to the Marathon runners and what proportion related to its charity work.

Sense was conscious that it wanted to achieve coverage that had an impact on the reader so that it could effectively communicate to them what it did as an organisation and, consequently, successfully champion the case of children and adults in the UK who were deafblind. Several KPIs were recommended by MML and a number of Key Messages and Core Messages were provided by Sense. It was agreed that Key Messages would be changed every quarter to reflect the seasonal nature of Sense's work. It was also agreed that coverage for individual campaigns would be tracked, as this was a key area in which Sense wanted to increase its visibility.

It was vitally important to the PR Department that MML produced a Report that reflected the work Sense undertook as an organisation. To ensure this was the case, a Benchmark Report was produced which was then discussed with the client. Parts of the Report remained consistent with what Sense had received in the past so that valid comparisons could be made with previous performance; however, innovative additions from MML were also included. For example, MML recommended that Sense move away from AVE measurement which it had used in the past as a way of demonstrating value, and instead tracked its coverage against the number of hits it received on its website ([Appendix 1](#)). MML also encouraged Sense to focus on the quality and penetration of its messages as a way of monitoring performance.

It was agreed that Sense would be supplied with its Report on a quarterly basis to ensure that it tied in with the organisation's quarterly departmental Reports and informed future strategy. These Reports were then supported by quarterly Report Cards which would be used at PR meetings.

Execution/Implementation:

To evaluate the effectiveness of Sense's PR strategy and its use of its resources, MML produced a number of innovative tracked charts. One such example tracked the percentage of adults that its coverage was reaching ([Appendix 2](#)). Such charts were important tools in helping Sense

¹ www.sense.org.uk

² Cinzia Marrocco (Sense)

compare its performance against that of previous periods. A separate section which focused on the London Marathon was also included. MML ensured that this provided Sense with more than just the basics. For example, in addition to a number of items metric, MML provided information on the number of items that not only mentioned the London Marathon ([Appendix 3.1](#)) but also included one of Sense's Key Messages or Core Messages ([Appendix 3.2](#)).

To enable Sense to monitor the quality of its coverage, MML began by measuring a number of basic metrics such as number of items, messages and the split of coverage by tone. Over time MML has added to these to provide Sense with a comprehensive overview of its performance in each period ([Appendix 4](#)).

MML also tracked Core Messages and Key Messages. Whether or not these appeared within Sense's coverage was a good indicator as to whether it was communicating effectively with its audience. The Core Messages reflected the fundamentals of Sense as an organisation, whilst the Key Messages related to its specific campaigns ([Appendix 5](#)).

MML also included a section within the Report which split coverage by region – allowing Sense to identify and target areas in the UK in which its messages were not being communicated, as well as areas in which it was particularly prominent ([Appendix 6](#)). This was important to Sense as the majority of its services were planned and delivered at a regional level.

To influence stakeholders and ensure the Report was of value to the whole organisation Key Messages were changed each quarter to keep information relevant. The production of a quarterly Report Card also played a vital role as it allowed the PR Department to not only monitor its own performance but also report back to internal stakeholders in a way that was accessible and demonstrated value ([Appendix 9](#)). Charts in the Report such as that which tracked the readership of UK adults reached by Sense coverage, against the number of visitors to its website, gave Sense a new way to demonstrate to stakeholders that it was adding value. Previously Sense had relied on AVEs to achieve this; however, through its work with MML, Sense educated stakeholders on the value of message penetration over AVEs.

Conclusions

1) As a result of the work of MML, Sense has gained a greater insight into the effectiveness of its PR strategy and is now planning the use of its resources more thoughtfully. For example, MML's focus on the Marathon showed that, while significant coverage was generated in this area, Key Message penetration was low ([Appendix 1](#)). Consequently, according to Cinzia, the Head of Communications at Sense, MML's work has given it ***'the confidence to decide to not PR a huge event it had been involved in for many years, saving almost £2,000.'*** MML's work has also helped Sense to better understand how to use its PR resources. Cinzia said, ***'The reports have helped to identify the need for Sense spokespeople to be seen as specialists. As a result we have developed guidelines on selecting spokespeople, identified areas in which we want to be seen as specialist and are in the process of training staff to fill these roles.'***

2) Coverage achieved by Sense is now of a higher quality and greater impact than was the case when it came to MML. Beneficial has more than doubled ([Appendix 4](#)) and Core Message penetration has increased significantly ([Appendix 5](#)). Coverage relating to Sense's campaigns is appearing more evenly across the UK ([Appendix 6](#)) and in national publications ([Appendix 7](#)). MML's work has helped Sense achieve more in depth media coverage in the last year – moving away from passing mentions, to an average of three messages per item ([Appendix 8](#)). According to Cinzia, in areas in which the quality of coverage was not reaching the level Sense had hoped for, as with the London Marathon, Sense is now, ***'Focusing on stories that provide a greater opportunity to deliver Key Messages.'***

3) MML's work has helped increase the PR Department's influence and, consequently, it is now playing an instrumental role within the organisation. The decision to move away from AVE value to message penetration as a way of demonstrating value played a critical role in this shift. Cinzia noted that the Report Card had also proved particularly effective in raising the profile of the PR Department, saying, ***'The Chief Executive has used it as an example of the preferred format other departments should aspire to.'*** She also stated that the work of MML had begun to influence organisational goals which go beyond the PR Department, saying, ***'It has helped us to identify the need to increase our profile in key target audiences and this now forms part of our five year organisational strategy.'*** As a result, MML is now playing an important role in helping Sense reach its challenging long term organisational goals.

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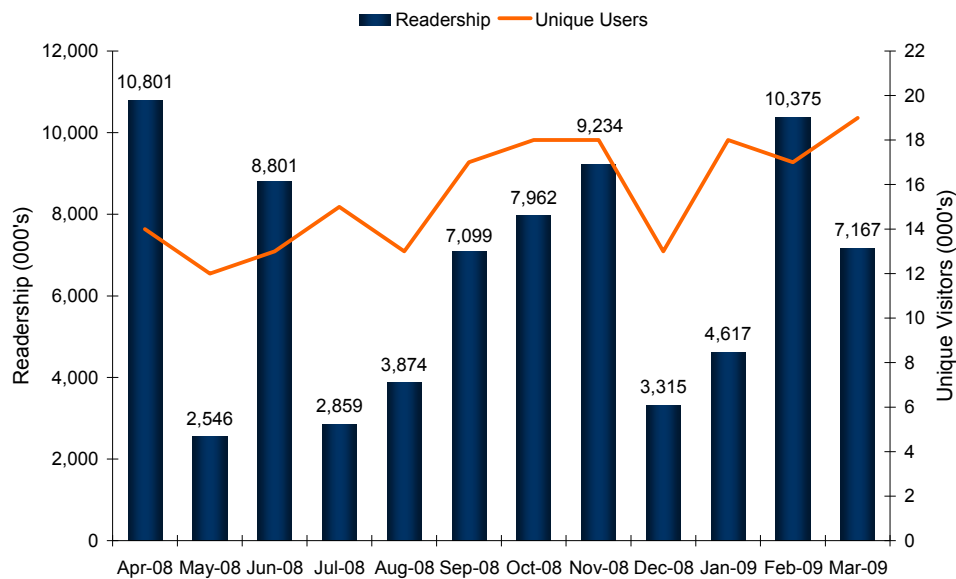
Supporting Information

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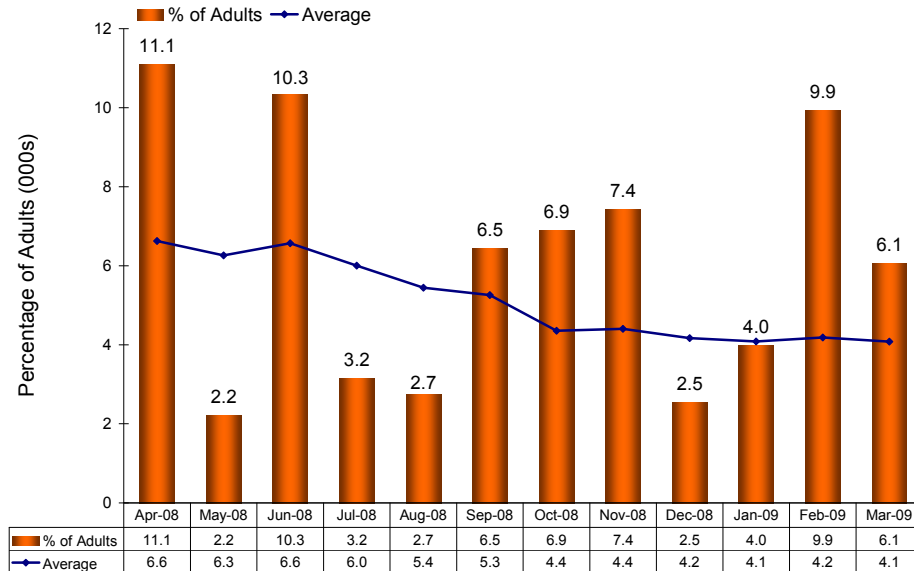
Appendix 1 – Readership Vs Online Visitors

MML advised Sense to move away from AVE as a way of demonstrating to stakeholders that its PR Department was providing good return on investment.

The chart below shows the Readership of UK adults reached by Sense coverage and the number of visitors to the Sense website over time. This was proposed to Sense as an alternative to AVE:



Appendix 2 - Percentage of UK Adult Population Reached



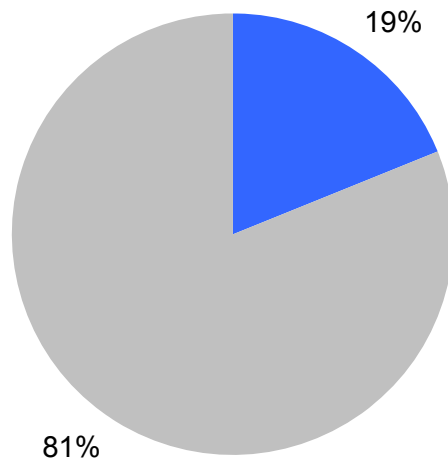
- Charts such as the one above were included in Sense's Reports and were an effective way for it to gauge whether its coverage was reaching the volumes of people it had anticipated. This chart also gave Sense the opportunity to compare its performance against that of previous periods.

Appendix 3 – The London Marathon

Appendix 3.1 – Items relating to the London Marathon

The chart below shows the proportion of items in the period January – March 2009 which mentioned Sense and the Flora London Marathon:

■ London Marathon message ■ No London Marathon message



Appendix 3.2 – Top Marathon Messages

The table below shows the top messages, in the period January – March 2009, in items that mentioned Sense and the London Marathon:

Message	Items	B	F	A	Total Mentions
London Marathon 2009	67	29	53	-	82
Barclaycard to raise £100,000 for Sense Money raised will fund vital services	17	16	1	-	17
Runners called upon to take part, Sense Run for Sense! (2009)	8	8	-	-	8
Limited number of Gold Bond places avail	6	1	5	-	6
Supports in the North/South East/West	4	-	4	-	4
	1	1	-	-	1
	1	1	-	-	1

Key Messages are highlighted in blue.

- Items that mentioned Sense and the London Marathon in the period generated 119 messages. However, Key Messages only accounted for 31% of these. The remaining 69% of messages merely referenced Sense's involvement in passing.

Appendix 4 – Basic Metrics

Below are some of the some of the metrics that MML provided Sense with within its Reports and its performance in each area.

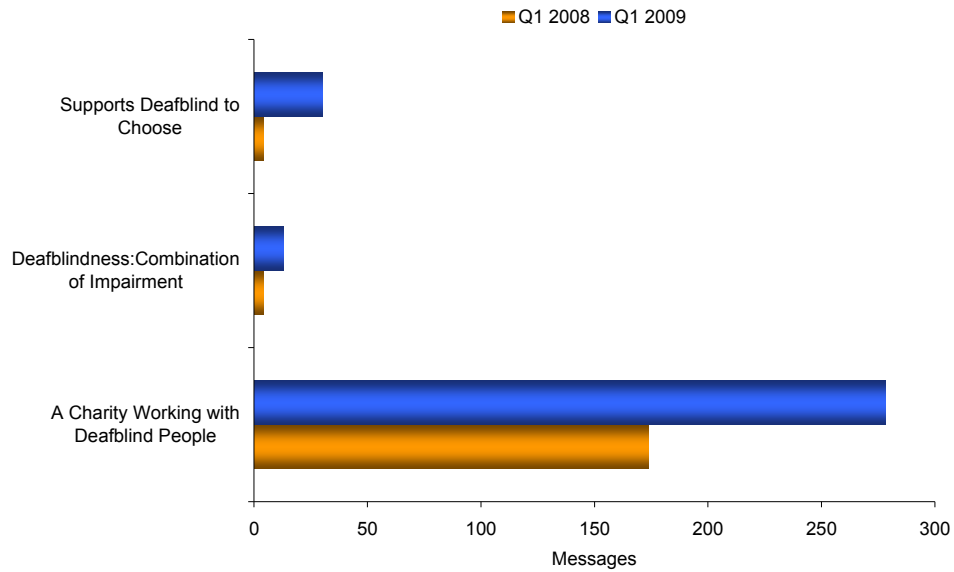
Key Metric	October to December 2008	October to December 2007
Number of Items	237	127
Beneficial Coverage	64%	31%
Factual Coverage	36%	69%
Adverse Coverage	-	-
-	-	-
Print Circulation	6,774,000	2,904,000
OTS	9,387,000	3,470,000
Print Readership	17,031,000	4,229,000
Radio Audience*	9,946,000	-
Television Viewing Figure*	2,201,000	-
Most Prolific Journalist	Emma Knights	Rebecca Lowe
Most Prolific Spokesperson	Barbara Deeth	Sue Brown
% of Adults Reached	12%	9%

- The table above shows how, through its work with MML, Sense successfully achieved a much higher volume of coverage by the end of 2008 than it had a year earlier. Also, the proportion of beneficial coverage achieved by Sense in this time more than doubled.

*Since beginning work for Sense in 2007 MML has expanded the number of metrics it provides, to give Sense a more comprehensive overview of its coverage.

Appendix 5 - Core Message Penetration

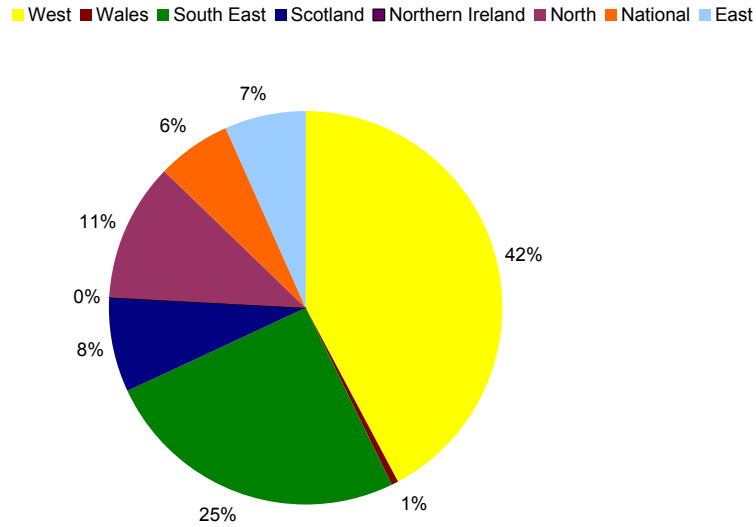
The chart below shows **Core Message** penetration in the period January – March 2008 against the same period in 2009.



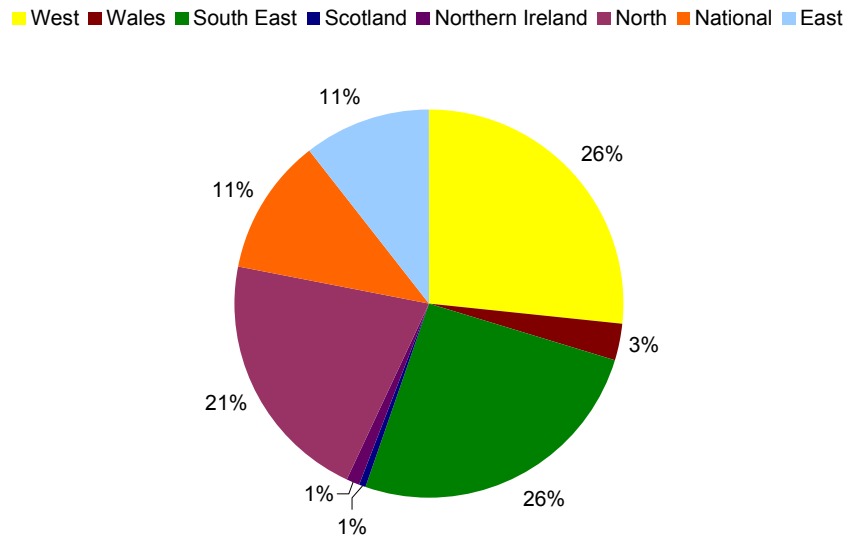
- **A Charity Working with Deafblind People** dominated in both periods, however, in Q1 2009, significantly more **Core Messages** appeared than was the case a year earlier.

Appendix 6 - Split of Coverage by Region

The chart below shows the split of messages by region for Sense coverage in the period January - March 2008:



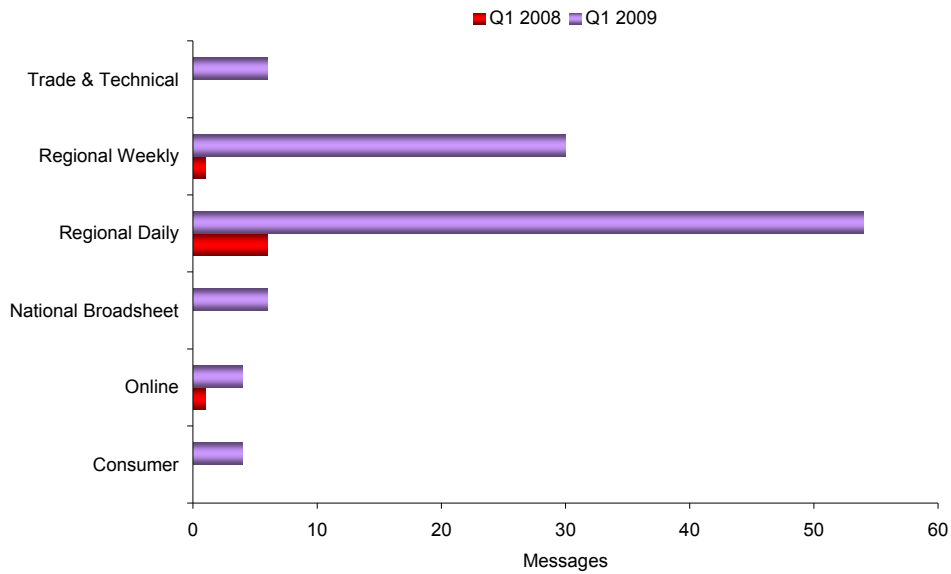
The chart below shows the split of messages by region for Sense coverage in the period October to December 2008:



- By the end of 2008 coverage was more evenly spread throughout the UK than had been the case at the start of the year.

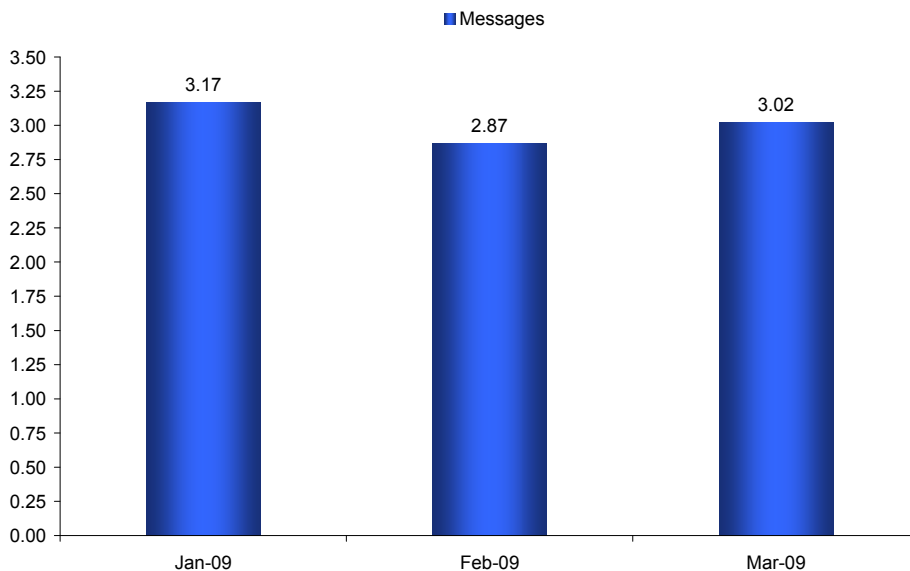
Appendix 7 - Campaigns Coverage

The chart below shows the number of messages generated by Sense campaigns by media type. The chart compares performance in January to March 2008, with January to March 2009.



- By Q1 2009, campaign coverage for Sense was appearing across a variety of publications, including the national press.

Appendix 8 – Number of messages per item



- By Q1 2009 Sense was generating an average of three messages in every one of its items.

Appendix 9 - The Report Card

MML ensured that Sense's Report Cards would be accessible to those in the PR Department and the organisation as a whole. The inclusion of KPIs was one way in which this was achieved:

KPIs

	Rolling Average	January to March 2009	Variation
KPI 1 Beneficial Messages	50.73%	56.88%	+6.15pp
KPI 2 Adverse Messages	0.10%	0.17%	+0.07pp
KPI 3 National Items	2.05%	2.83%	+0.78pp
KPI 4 Opportunities to See	14,411,600	10,603,000	-3,808,600
KPI 5 Items with Sense Source	21.06%	21.38%	+0.32pp
KPI 6 Percentage of Items with Core Message	74.79%	80.82%	+6.03pp
KPI 7 Campaign Coverage	6.99%	9.06%	+2.07pp

- By Q1 2009 Sense was performing strongly across the majority of its KPIs.