

Promoting a new convention center  
with a purpose...  
and introducing conservation  
in the meeting industry



ICCA BEST MARKETING AWARD  
ENTRY 2017

  
FLANDERS  
MEETING &  
CONVENTION  
CENTER  
ANTWERP

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Flanders Meeting & Convention Center Antwerp (FMCCA), a newly opened purpose-built convention centre in Antwerp, launched a **MARKETING CAMPAIGN** to create rapid brand awareness and brand reputation - from scratch - to attract more international congresses to the relatively unknown city of Antwerp. As a newcomer in the International Meeting industry, we needed to learn fast, stand out and do something different. We deployed a fully integrated marketing approach with the continuous use of a strong 3-way concept, tapping into the Industry's increasing needs for sustainable value and meaning.

## THE 3-WAY CONCEPT FEATURES:

**MATADI:** our silverback gorilla as embodiment of the centre's link to the Antwerp ZOO and icon for conservation in our Meeting Activities

**ROOM WITH A ZOO:** the positioning tagline that highlights the centre's biggest

benefit including emotional value: its location on the premises of the Antwerp ZOO - among oldest scientific zoo's in the world, offering great social program opportunities as well as green gardens that nature and make meetings more effective

## INSTANT CSR THROUGH

**CONSERVATION:** the promise of immediate conservation support, tapping into the Industry's hunger for purpose and meaningful sustainability. Because of the kinship with the ZOO (owned by same Foundation) all revenue from meeting activities goes to the full conservation program of the Antwerp ZOO (Foundation).

THE COMBINATION OF PRODUCT FEATURES, FUNCTIONAL BENEFITS, EMOTIONAL VALUE (STORYTELLING) AND PURPOSE WORKS WELL AND OFFERS A SOLUTION TO THE CALL FOR MORE SUSTAINABLE MEETINGS AND LEGACY BUILDING.

# #aroomwithaZOO

## Instant CSR through conservation

[fmcca.com](http://fmcca.com)

@FMCCAbelgium



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# OBJECTIVE OF CAMPAIGN

Powerfully **MARKET** a new convention centre, FMCCA, located in the 19th century buildings of Antwerp's legendary ZOO.

Create **STRONG BRAND AWARENESS** with impact within the local, regional and global Meeting Industry aligned with relevant positioning to build interest/purchase intent and possibly promoters who will do the selling for you.

Establish brand **REPUTATION** with positive brand associations, leading to purchase intent and word of mouth.

## 10 CONTRACTED CONGRESSES

upon opening of the centre taking into account: long lead-times, a 3 year time period to learn launch and market, and build international dbase from scratch.



# STRATEGY OF CAMPAIGN

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A 3-WAY CONCEPT AND INTEGRATED MARKETING PLAN:

STAGE 1: DEVELOPMENT OF A 3-WAY CONCEPT THAT CAN BE USED THROUGHOUT THE CAMPAIGN TO BREAK THROUGH THE CLUTTER OF DESTINATION AND VENUE PROMOTION. GET NOTICED FAST.

## 1) STRONG DIFFERENTIATING VISUAL:

- aligned with positioning based on location in ZOO
- designed to break through the visual clutter of commodities and architectural/destination imagery
- moving from product benefits (easy to get to/location), ... to emotional visual that triggers
- which is multidimensional: vessel for narratives around social program of the ZOO, the importance of nature in meetings and dimension of conservation



# STRATEGY OF CAMPAIGN

## 2) STORYTELLING – A ROOM WITH A ZOO:

- emotionally engages the audience
- enhances the meeting experience
- allows for compelling communication and promotion of the congress for the client
- the immediate social benefits like dining with the fish, ZOO by night, morning jogging, ...
- **nature nurtures:**
  - having green gardens at disposal for restorative breaks, easier networking
  - nurturing powers of nature for cognitive capabilities: better information retention e.g.



# STRATEGY OF CAMPAIGN

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## 3) LEGACY – INSTANT CSR THROUGH CONSERVATION

- the kinship with the ZOO means that all revenue from the event spaces goes to conservation work of the ZOO Foundation (owner of the convention centre)
- gives every client instant green CSR angle to event without further efforts
- introduces conservation as a new green dimension to meeting industry



# STRATEGY IN CAMPAIGN

## STAGE 2: CREATION OF AN INTEGRATED MARKETING PLAN TO ASSURE MAXIMAL PRESENCE AND IMPACT, FOCUSING ON KEY MARKETS

- 1) Mediaplan incl paid media (20% print and online) and strong PR : stretching budget with free pub by providing emotional storytelling and purpose to the press and the industry
- 2) Accelerated training and education plan for team
- 3) Attending key Trade Shows and conferences, with proper preparation and follow up, using conceptual narrative
- 4) Build reputation by maximising presence through Concept Visual, Press Conferences, Presentations, Brand Activation Initiatives (e.g. Dome at IBTM)

## 5) Branded Events:

- Soft Launch Events to generate buy-in with local national and international stakeholders
- Grand Opening with international press and government
- Exclusive Seminar (140 pax) on Conservation with International Association Leaders, Academics and Press

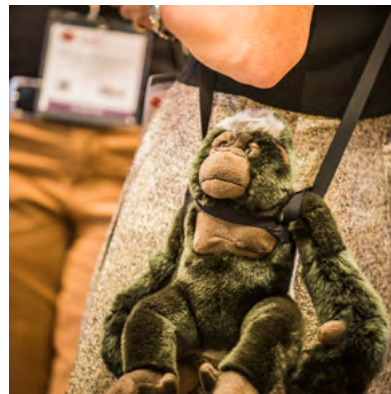
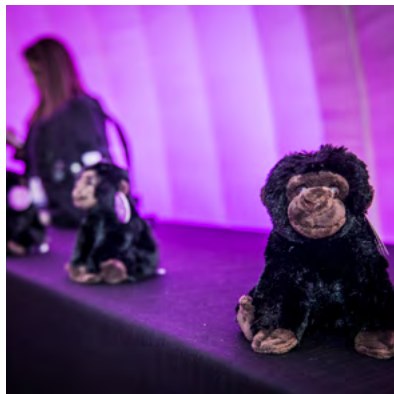
## NEXT:

- RESPONSE WILL BE MEASURED THROUGH QUALITATIVE (ORGANISER) AND QUANTITATIVE (DELEGATE) RESEARCH SURVEYS DESIGNED TO DEFINE AND CLARIFY THE IMPACT OF THE INTER-ACTION OF HUMANS (AKA DELEGATES) WITH THE ANIMALS AND WHAT IT MEANT TO THE QUALITY OF THE EVENT.
- QUANTIFYING DELEGATE CONTRIBUTION TO CONSERVATION E.G. BUYS X M<sup>2</sup> FOR HABITAT ENDANGERED SPECIES.



E.g. during the IBTM 2016 Dome Experience attention was gained with a big gorilla, Matadi, sitting out-front of the Dome for photo ops together with the message 'A Room with a ZOO', gaining front-page news with the IBTM Daily.

# PRESS CONFERENCES AND TRADE SHOW PRESENTATIONS



# SOFT LAUNCHES, GRAND OPENING & EXCLUSIVE EVENTS FOR INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS



# EVALUATION OF CAMPAIGN

## RETURN ON INVESTMENT AND/OR RETURN ON OBJECTIVES:

### 1) QUALITATIVE:

- Prestigious bids won within 2 years of opening: IMEC (2017) 1 month after opening and contract for next year, AWC (2018) 1 year after opening, AIPC (2019) 2 years after opening,...
- Buzz on tradeshow, noticed by Meeting Industry leadership and press
- Reinforcement of Antwerp's reputation in the Meeting Industry
- Balanced client portfolio (Associations & Corporations – international/national/regional)
- Position in Faculty ECM Summer School
- Growth database with solid leads to continue sales process and guarantee future business

### 2) MARKETING KPI'S

- One of key business workshops survey: 35% response rate with 100% purchase intent
- Another survey across industries and regions: brand awareness 11%

### 3) ROI (€) 15 X !! THROUGH: QUANTITATIVE INVESTMENT AND RESULTS WITHIN 18 MONTHS CAMPAIGN

- 31 sold congresses upon opening with another 60 in the pipeline, way above KPI's and expectations.
- 36 sold up to date and 75 in pipeline
- Growth database: +8900 %

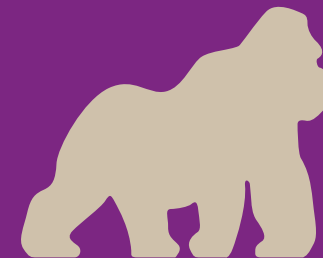
### 4) MEDIA RETURN: 575 X !! THROUGH: PR:

- At least € 0,5 million worth
- 106 news articles in online & offline press
- E.g. gorilla Matadi and 'A Room with a ZOO' message gained front-page news in the IBTM daily.

### 5) SOCIAL:

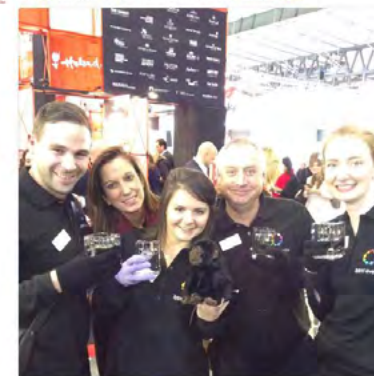
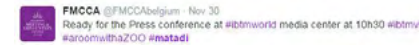
- More than 260,000 content impressions
- +1,142% growth LinkedIn reach
- +6,000% growth LinkedIn engagement
- +170% growth Facebook fans

EUR MEDIA  
INVESTMENT



X 575  
COVERAGE

# SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN



# LESSONS LEARNED

## 1) THE VALUE OF THE MEETING

**INDUSTRY** is not just to exchange knowledge or the financial Economic Impact for the City but we also found that with the longlasting effects of leaving a Legacy for the meeting how we could also play an essential role as a venue with our nature and conservation storytelling and actual initiatives within the zoo context.

## 2) MARKETERS! GET THE SALES TEAM ON BOARD!

Train sales people in the narrative (easier to stick to product benefits). Marketeers need to do the internal selling and help sales people move towards solution provision in an inspiring way gaining TRUST and building relationships. There may be a % of our portfolio that isn't motivated by CSR but it will always add value. And in the end it is our positioning and our story and even sales people need to stick to it.

## 3) THE ALLURING ENERGY OF

**KNOWING** your 'why' and how it contributes to other people's lives has given particular motivation and zest to the whole team at FMCCA. This was very obvious for all to see during the IBTM 2016 Dome Experience when 7 of us girls, dressed the same, worked the show floor, the pressroom and the Dome delivering 11 presentations in 3 days with close to 200 associations and organisers attending to hear the essential message of communications. Attention was gained with our big Gorilla, Matadi, sitting outfront of the Dome for photo ops together with our message of 'A ROOM WITH A ZOO' gaining frontpage news with the exhibition daily. These are all experiences that will reach far beyond the business results into teambuilding memories.

## BROADER IMPLICATIONS:

- Taking **green/sustainable thinking** in the Meetings Industry beyond food and energy into the new unexplored area of conservation and human/animal interchange.
- **Infusing Nature** into our design and concept of meetings and closing the gap between meeting technology and nature.
- Changing the minds of how people think about **the role of zoos** from showcasing exotic animals to constructive leading conservation players.



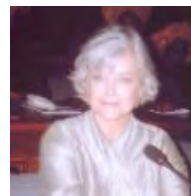
**Luc Niville Executive Director Semico Group:**

"It promises to offer the wildest dreams of every PCO: a well situated high-end congress venue, in a class of its own: spacious well equipped rooms placed around a central atrium, a large number of breakout rooms and with that so important extra element: the gardens of the ZOO."



**Prof. Dr. Andry Vleeming:**

"What an extraordinary and bold idea to invite Jimmy Nelson, a world class photographer, as a keynote speaker to your CSR seminar. Truly a magnificent, brilliantly executed idea."



**Liz Jackson, FASAE, President Jackson Consulting Inc:**

"I have been to many client events over my years in the MICE industry and yours was one of the best organized and most carefully designed to draw buyers into an appreciation of a room with a ZOO. I will recommend it with enthusiasm."