

TELEVISION

Tattoo TV show makes mark on London

Campaign Launch of *London Ink*
Client Discovery Real Time
Team Frank PR
Timescale June to September 2007
Budget £40,000

London Ink is a spin-off from Discovery Real Time's hugely popular *Miami Ink* series, billing itself as a cross between reality TV and a docu-soap following Britain's most exciting tattoo studio. The show shadows the fiery relationships between some of the country's best tattooists – mentored by Louis Molloy.

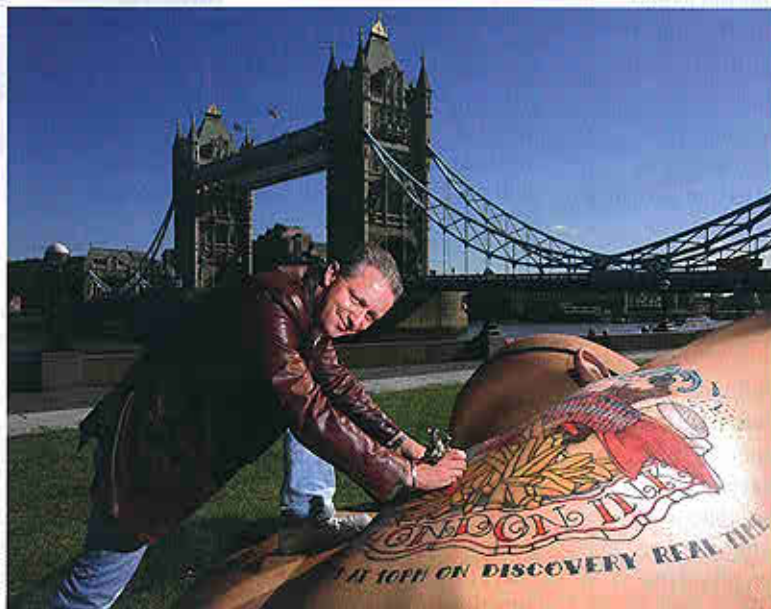
Molloy is best known for being David Beckham's tattooist, and has 'inked' many of Britain's sporting heroes. Frank PR was brought in to promote the show.

Objective

Get the launch of *London Ink* in the national news and create a buzz ahead of the show's broadcast. To take tattooing into the mainstream.

Strategy and plan

The strategy began with a features-driven campaign exploring the world of tattooing. This was followed by a visual stunt with a London edge that would get Londoners talking. The features generation started in June when the programme was being filmed, with media joining the cast on set as



Larger than life: Molloy at the swimmer statue's unveiling on London's South Bank

they tattooed guests. Some brave hacks were even tattooed. All of the show's tattooists were used as spokespeople but the main focus was Molloy.

In the week of the launch two giant, life-like human figures were created. One was a giant swimming man in a front crawl pose with head, torso, arm and foot rising out of the ground and measuring 46 feet long. The second figure was a woman squeezing into a photo booth, like a surreal scene from *Alice in Wonderland*. Each sculpture featured a bespoke tattoo design, created

by Molloy, that delivered the tune-in details in a creative way.

The swimmer was revealed on the South Bank, and the female figure, dubbed 'Victoria', was positioned on concourse one at Victoria station. These locations were chosen to provide striking images that showed off the scale of the sculptures, but also they were areas of high footfall so the sculptures would double as creative 'outdoor advertising'. The unveilings were staggered over the course of the week preceding transmission.

At the unveiling of the swimmer statue, Molloy was on hand to 'ink' the finishing touches to the sculpture's tattoo. Furthermore, the stunt complemented the campaign's features generation activity with a piece in that morning's *Metro*, which further heightened the public's awareness around the launch event. The London Ink Facebook group was employed to update fans on media coverage and a video of the sculptures being put up overnight was seeded on YouTube.

Measurement and evaluation

The campaign achieved 15 pieces of national print coverage, including a three-page feature in *The Guardian Guide*. The tattooists were profiled in various publications including *the Londonpaper*, *Metro*, *Independent*, *The Observer* and *Time Out*.

The stunt generated four national news pieces and five in the London evening papers on the week of launch. Broadcast highlights include *London Ink* being the focus of a 15-minute arts and culture programme on BBC Radio 2.

Results

London Ink's launch show was Discovery Real Time's highest rating programme in two years with audience figures up 500 per cent for the channel from the same slot the previous week.

Alex Black

SECOND OPINION



Amy Hitchener, projects director at experiential agency notactualsize, ran the experiential campaign around the first competitive NFL game in London – Dolphins v Giants at the O2 Arena last year

Overall this was a neat and well-executed campaign, tightly underpinned by solid media relations. Frank took advantage of the Beckham angle and it was a smart move to create a groundswell of interest on the

subject of tattooing on the news agenda generally by targeting the features pages.

The bold stunt initiative also felt well planned, particularly the emphasis on high footfall locations.

But it is a shame the sculptures didn't have a more interactive element to them. Tattoos are about displaying designs and messages, and people could have inadvertently become human advertising by offering a

temporary tattoo design service to passers by.

I should also confess to being a little baffled by the names of the sculptures and their relevance to the locations.

I get the 'Victoria' and 'swimmer' names, but they feel a little clunky and I'm not convinced they were either charming or engaging enough to make the broader campaign connection with the consumer. But I must stress, I didn't actually see this stunt.

This aside, it appears to have been well exploited on Facebook, and using Louis Molloy to launch these sculptures made a lot of sense.

The results speak for themselves, ranging from *Time Out* to BBC Radio 2.

More importantly, to achieve a 500 per cent increase in ratings on the previous week would suggest that this campaign delivered exactly what the programme makers were after.