



HEADLINE STATISTICS

- 74,468 - World record attendance for a Rugby League International fixture
- Target marketing for the 'Big Hit' attracted a 70% audience from London and the south
- Best Wembley moment of 2013

DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

- 40% average email open rate
- Click through rates as high as 91.5%
- Average CTO of 40%



DATA - THE KEY TO THE SUCCESS OF THE RUGBY LEAGUE WORLD CUP 2013

The sport of Rugby League has undoubtedly benefited from RLWC2013, with the tournament hitting the headlines with a number of success stories.

The 28 matches were watched by record crowds and bumper television audiences. The attendance of 74,468 for the final broke the world record for a rugby league international match and over 67 thousand people enjoyed the 'Big Hit' semi-finals at Wembley Stadium, voted as Best Wembley Moment of 2013 ahead of the UEFA Champions League final, the NFL and other sporting and musical events.

SETTING THE STAGE FOR SUCCESS

RLWC2013 set out for success right from the word go having identified the importance of a CRM & data marketing strategy.

Mark Foster, Marketing Manager said "we were aware of the importance of the collection of customer data so that we could contact them in a meaningful way with information that they were interested in. We also knew that this database would be an important legacy for the future of the sport. As a result we selected 4Sight Sport to help us in this area.

After appointing 4Sight a joint plan was developed using key phases in the lead up to the tournament. This was based around the development and implementation of the traditional AIDA model; Awareness, interest, desire and action as the key phases before and during the tournament.

Data Driven Approach

"We believe that our data and fan engagement strategy was a major factor in the success of the tournament"

- Mark Foster, Marketing Manager



Luca Lasi, CRM Consultant at 4Sight commented "We knew that early on the key issue was to build awareness of the tournament rather than a gung-ho sales approach. This was followed by the collection of their preferences to assess what they might be interested in so that we could turn that into a desire to buy. Then of course just prior to the tournament the contact strategy changes to be around sales.

These phases included detailed analysis and profiling, before segmentation work was carried out in order to define key target groups to which we could target with relevant and timely marketing communications.

To assist this approach, RLWC2013's CRM technology was used in order to implement an online registration portal and the 4Sight 'Preference Manager' system for a richer level of insight. One specific geographic segment that was targeted was London and 'the south', as a focus for the matches to be played at Wembley which proved to deliver some fantastic results.

With the traditional profile of a typical fan of rugby league generally considered to be located in the rugby league hotbeds of the north of the country and with a desire to take the sport to a wider UK audience, extra focus was given to this group. Careful consideration was given to the research, branding and communication strategy for the 'Big Hit' at Wembley, where the crowd was made up of an astonishing 70% who were from this southern geography.

Whilst building interest from the more 'traditional' territories could have been seen as a little more straightforward it was still important to ensure that these groups received the same level of focus and attention to detail in understanding and communicating to them in a more targeted way.



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**- Mark Foster,
Marketing Manager**



ATTRACTING AND ENGAGING AN AUDIENCE

The e-communications strategy was vital to supporting the overall engagement with fans, and more importantly, presented the ability to measure the level of success.

The bulk of these communications were delivered over a 5 week period, consisting of over 100 emails. A mixture of engaging content and strategically placed sales messages made up pre-match, post-match and other ‘ad-hoc’ emails.

The industry average email open rate of 20%-25% was well surpassed with average rates across the campaign of 41%. Fans were also evidently finding the email content appealing; Average click to open rates (CTO) were as high as 91.5% with an average of 40%.

Mark Foster commented:

“We believe that our data and fan engagement strategy, managed by 4Sight was a major factor in the success of the tournament.”

ESTABLISHING A LASTING LEGACY

The success criteria for ticket sales and engagement of fans were clearly something of a success story, but significant attention and planning is in place to maximise the legacy of RLWC2013.

For almost a quarter of the crowd, the matches were their first live rugby league experience and the success of the Big Hit was important for the legacy in the south and attracting 70% of the Wembley crowd from that region was an excellent starting point. The RFL now has an increased database of fans as a result of the data collection procedures put in place for the tournament.

Initial legacy plans have included communication with those new fans to take advantage of their newly generated excitement for the sport to check what they may want to do in future. Fans were asked if they would be interested in watching, playing, coaching or officiating and once the replies were received they were pointed in the relevant direction. Further early signs of a tournament legacy have come in the form of season ticket sales for some of the many clubs. Rochdale Hornets are one club that has seen an increase that could be as a direct result of the tournament.

Much more is planned with data to be at the heart of the RLWC2013 legacy strategy.

RFL Chief Operating Officer, Ralph Rimmer said “we are in a strong position to capitalise on the fantastic success of the RLWC2013 and have developed plans to build a future legacy. A major part of those plans involves the increased use of data and CRM which are techniques of increasing importance within sport and we are looking forward to working with 4Sight Sport who will provide their expertise and support in these key areas.