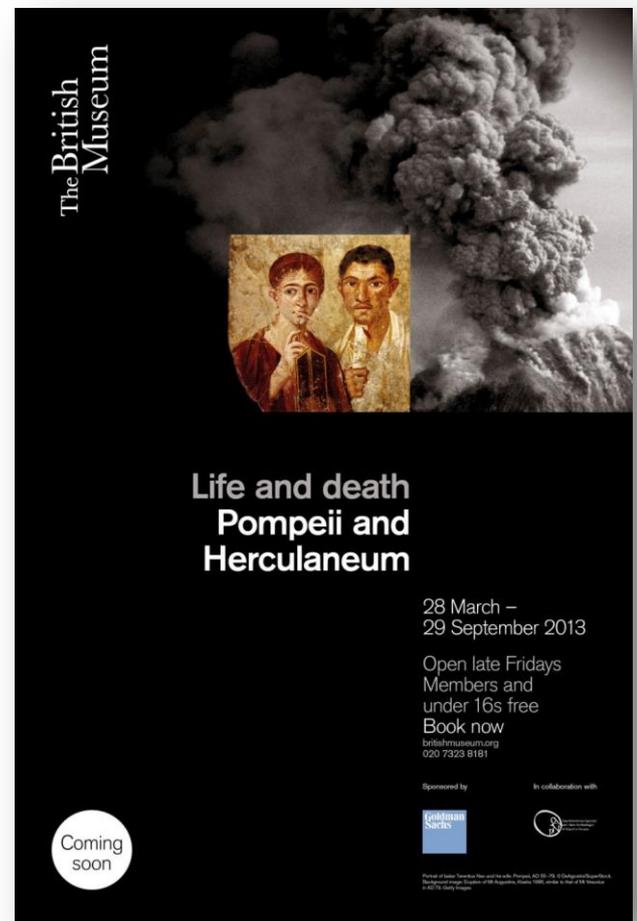


Pompeii exhibition at the British Museum



Life and death in Pompeii and Herculaneum exhibition poster at the British Museum. © The Trustees of the British Museum

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Life and death in Pompeii and Herculaneum
The British Museum
28 March – 29 September 2013

Sponsored by Goldman Sachs

*In collaboration with Soprintendenza Speciale per i Beni
Archeologici di Napoli e Pompei*

Background

The British Museum in London is the world's leading museum of human history and culture. Founded in 1753, the British Museum's remarkable collection spans over two million years of human history. Visitors enjoy a unique comparison of the treasures of world cultures under one roof, centred around the magnificent Great Court and the historic Reading Room.

World-famous objects such as the Rosetta Stone, Parthenon sculptures and Egyptian mummies are visited by up to 6 million visitors each year. In addition to the vast permanent collection, the Museum's special exhibitions, displays and events are all designed to advance understanding of the collection and cultures they represent.



British Museum Great Court © The Trustees of the British Museum

In March 2013, the British Museum staged a major exhibition on Pompeii and Herculaneum. While there are often exhibitions around the world touring on the subject of Pompeii, what made the exhibition truly unique was the conjunction of objects not only from Pompeii, a major Roman city, but also those from Herculaneum, a small seaside town. This gave an alternative view of life in the Roman Empire, in contrast to the more stereotypical imagery of togas, centurions and gladiators.

The exhibition specifically focused on the daily lives of ordinary people in these areas, and aimed to highlight the strong resonances between life in the Roman Empire and our lives today. Taking visitors on a journey through a reconstruction of a Roman home, the objects displayed were placed contextually in their respective rooms as they would have been in the real environment. Thanks to the Superintendency for Archaeological Heritage of Naples and Pompeii, who gave the exhibition curator unprecedented and unrestricted access to objects from Naples Museum and the sites of Pompeii and Herculaneum, the British Museum was able to mount an exhibition of spectacular loan items that may never be seen again in the UK.

Marketing campaign objectives

- To achieve the exhibition visitor target of 250,000 visitors
- To generate excitement and a sense of scale for this exhibition through a long lead advance ticket sales campaign
- To encourage audiences to attend the related public events
- To support the promotion of membership and the related retail and catering activities e.g. Pompeii restaurant menu, catalogue, mobile app
- To encourage visitors to continue their relationship with the Museum via social media and newsletters, as well as through future online and venue visitation
- To fulfil the exhibition sponsorship commitments

Target audiences

The British Museum works with a number of different systems for categorising audiences. However, the marketing team predominantly works with Morris Hargreaves McIntyre's 'culture segments'.

Primary

- Regular arts/culture audiences (Essence, Enrichment, Expression culture segments) – 40+, educated, London/South East/wider UK
- International visitors – focus on short haul European markets
- UK families – making the most of stay/day-cation visitors which have increased due to recession

Secondary

- Wider leisure segments where culture competes with wider mix of activities (Entertainment and Affirmation culture segments) from London/South East/wider UK
- Group travellers (weekend and day trips from UK)
- Students with a focus on history, classics, art history
- Experts – academic/scholarly in Roman history, leadership empires

Process

The campaign was split into 5 distinct phases:

- Launch phase: 20 September – 31 December 2012
- Pre-opening phase: 1 January – 28 March 2013
- Opening month: April 2013
- Mid exhibition: May – August 2013
- Final weeks: late August – 29 September 2013

The marketing strategy was focused around a gradual build through the launch and pre-opening phase, with a strong paid media emphasis on the opening month. Sustained activity would then remind audiences about the exhibition and reinforce the need to book in advance. A strong paid media presence was planned for the 'Final weeks' messaging from late August. However, this was subsequently scaled back due to all advance tickets for the exhibition being sold out by early August.

Launch phase: 20 September – 31 December 2012

- Exhibition press launch on 20 September attended by key journalists
- Live tweeting and blogging of press announcement
- Tickets on sale on the British Museum website
- Tickets on sale ecard sent to 'What's on' database of 130K subscribers
- Onsite signage at the British Museum installed
- Social media updates throughout the period
- Groups and travel trade long-lead press advertising

Mid exhibition: May – August 2013

- Sustained advertising across arts publications and London newspapers
- Partnership marketing activity including:
 - Parents' morning view of the exhibition in partnership with Mumsnet
 - Pompeii window display at local branches of Waterstone's and Foyles
 - Exhibition-branded coffee sleeves in Benugo branches around London
 - Exhibition inclusion in partner email marketing such as Carluccio's, Italian Bookshop in London, Hay Festival
 - Reciprocal email marketing with other cultural venues such as the National Gallery, Royal Academy of Arts, and the V&A
- Digital advertising on Guardian online and Timeout.com
- Pompeii exhibition app launched
- Competition to win an additional Pompeii holiday in partnership with Daily Mail Group promoted via their marketing channels
- Radio advertising on Magic FM
- Positive press reviews added to website
- Exhibition inclusion in monthly What's on email to 130K subscribers
- Social media content updates including:
 - Behind-the-scenes photo albums
 - Live Q&As/live tweeting on Twitter
 - Bastille live performance of the single 'Pompeii' in exhibition
 - Installation photos
 - Archive photos
 - Themed weekly posts based on rooms of the Roman house
 - Facts and shareable factoids
- Ticket competition (once exhibition sold out) on LondonCalling.com
- 'Pompeii Live from the British Museum' broadcast to cinemas around the UK

Final weeks: late August – 29 September 2013

- Limited 'Final weeks' press advertising in key publications and newspapers
- 'Last chance to see' 4 sheet underground posters
- 'Pompeii Live from the British Museum' broadcasts around the world
- Promoted tweets on Twitter
- 'Last chance' inclusion in September What's on email to 130K subscribers
- 'Last chance' readership promotional events with Times Plus
- Social media updates advising on ticket availability

Pompeii Live

The British Museum staged two unique live broadcasts from the exhibition in June 2013 – to cinema audiences across the UK and Ireland, and to school groups. These were shown in nearly 300 cinemas, through all the major UK cinema groups including Cineworld, Odeon, Picturehouse and Vue, as well as independent venues. *Pompeii Live from the British Museum* was a first for the Museum – a live



Pompeii Live © The Trustees of the British Museum

cinema event broadcast from an exhibition. Tickets went on sale in cinemas on 28 March 2013, the same day as the exhibition opened.

As the project was organised with a short lead time and limited budget, the strategy was very much focused around content marketing through our existing channels to drive engagement and encourage bookings for the live event, and through cinemas and their networks to promote the screening to their audiences.

Most of the marketing was done in-house by the British Museum marketing and web teams; however an FTP site was set up with a large amount of content, assets, artwork and information to enable cinemas as much as possible to support the broadcast through their own marketing activity.

The marketing campaign for the main broadcast included the following:

- Mailing of posters and postcards to nearly 300 cinemas
- Email marketing to What's on list of 130K subscribers
- Competitions with cinemas to win tickets to *Pompeii Live*
- Full page advertising in the *Guardian Guide*
- Full page advertising in *Sight and Sound* magazine
- Inclusion in *Sight and Sound* newsletter to 22K subscribers

The marketing campaign for the schools broadcast included the following:

- Mailing from Film Education to 12,000 schools
- Mailing from Picturehouse cinemas to their list of over 300 schools in key *Pompeii Live* screening areas
- Email marketing to the British Museum schools list of 15K subscribers
- Full page advertising in *The Teacher* magazine

Social media was key to delivering engaging content which would provoke discussion, sharing and broaden our reach to ensure a UK-wide campaign. The social media campaign was designed to generate buzz and interest, encourage ticket sales and broaden the Museum's audience reach through meaningful content marketing. By generating intrigue in the subject matter of *Pompeii Live*, audiences were driven to purchase tickets to learn more.

A content plan was formulated for Facebook and Twitter which provided a range of shareable content including object images, albums, blogs, facts, infographics and presenter announcements, together with a daily countdown.

The timings of the social media campaign leading up to and following the live event were as follows:

- **From 2 months before:** Content updates on social media as details were confirmed and Pompeii Live created as a joinable Facebook event
- **7 days before:** 7-day countdown with changing Facebook profile images (In Roman numerals) acting as the countdown and shareable object/text image blocks
- **1 day before:** 24-hour real-time eruption countdown across social media through sharing content and infographics, and collected together on an interactive timeline on the website
- **On the day:** Behind-the-scenes photos of presenters arriving, broadcast trucks setting up, and Twitter/Facebook updates of the event as it happened
- **1–2 days after:** Updates on encore screenings around the UK
- **3 days after:** Live Twitter Q&A with presenter Peter Snow and Exhibition Curator Paul Roberts, using #PompeiiLive and #PompeiiLiveQ

Overall, the project achieved beyond all its targets, and in both local independent cinemas and multi-venue chains an almost 100% sales rate was achieved across all screens with over 50,000 people watching the live broadcast all over the UK and Ireland. *Pompeii Live* went on to screen worldwide in August and September 2013.

Outcomes

At the time of writing (early September 2013), the exhibition is yet to close however there have already been some key noteworthy outcomes:

- The exhibition has exceeded its original visitor target of 250,000 and has now welcomed over 385,000 visitors, still with three weeks of the exhibition remaining.
- Advance exhibition tickets sold out in early August, nearly two months before the close of the exhibition.
- Exhibition opening hours have been extended through early morning and late evening openings to accommodate as many visitors as possible.
- The competition to win a holiday to Pompeii received over 15,000 entries.
- The competition to win a weekend stay in London and exhibition visit received over 23,000 entries.
- Across the period of the exhibition, British Museum membership rose from 48,000 to over 66,000 Members.
- *Pompeii Live* achieved an almost 100% sales rate across all screens with over 50,000 people watching the live broadcast all over the UK and Ireland.
- Facebook fans have risen from under 300,000 to over 400,000 during the exhibition, and Twitter followers have risen from under 150,000 followers to nearly 200,000.
- Bastille's video of the band performing in the exhibition has been viewed nearly 400,000 times on YouTube to date.

- The exhibition trailer has been viewed over 85,000 times in six months, higher than any other British Museum exhibition trailer.
- Website traffic reached the highest levels ever seen on the two days preceding the exhibition opening with over 440,000 page views per day.
- Exhibition content has been viewed on the website by over 1m people, generating nearly 2.4m page views.
- The hashtag #PompeiiLive was tweeted over 50,000 times.
- The hashtag #PompeiiExhibition was tweeted over 400,000 times.
- The Pompeii exhibition email featuring the trailer was the best performing email campaign ever broadcast by the Museum with nearly 30% open rate and over 10% click-through rate, sending nearly 11,000 visits to the website.
- The Pompeii exhibition 'takeover' of the April 2013 What's on email was the best performing What's on email for three years.

Key points for effective practice

- Be ready for last-minute opportunities – having some budget in reserve and artwork ready to go means you can take advantage of any advertising opportunities that arise on short notice, and get great space at far cheaper rates than you normally pay.
- Partnerships are key to extending the reach of your marketing campaign – these can be fantastic ways to boost your activity and engage audiences in more creative ways.
- Lack of budget doesn't necessarily mean lack of activity – you can do a lot with very little money through existing channels and external networks.

Additional information

Life and death in Pompeii and Herculaneum exhibition webpage:

http://www.britishmuseum.org/whats_on/exhibitions/pompeii_and_herculaneum.aspx

Pompeii Live webpage:

http://www.britishmuseum.org/whats_on/exhibitions/pompeii_and_herculaneum/pompeii_live.aspx

Pompeii exhibition trailer: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jPzp-l0tNh4&feature=share&list=PL0LQM0SAx600InzV1rfECfnHwufDdJL_Z

Pompeii Live trailer: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aHoHl-wJTxx&list=PL0LQM0SAx600InzV1rfECfnHwufDdJL_Z

British Museum blog: <http://blog.britishmuseum.org/>

Bastille performing their single 'Pompeii' in the British Museum Reading Room:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=27DelLooE1o>