The man marketing world peace

Why Unilever, Skype and Innocent are backing Peace One Day founder Jeremy Gilley

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Achieving world peace is not the typical aim of a deodorant targeted largely at teenage boys but ‘Make love, not war’ is the slogan accompanying Unilever’s latest Lynx product (known as Axe outside the UK).

The company is running a campaign in 50 countries to promote its new Peace variant of Lynx. The idea stems from Unilever chief executive Paul Polman’s relationship with Jeremy Gilley, film-maker, former actor and founder of Peace One Day, who in 2001 persuaded all United Nations member states to sign up to Peace Day – a day of ceasefire and non-violence.

Speaking to Marketing Week, Polman says this launch is more than just a funding exercise. Lynx will work with Peace One Day to help young people to positively influence their communities, culminating with Peace Day on 21 September (see ‘Measuring awareness’, page 12).

“It is imperative for businesses to be involved with organisations like Peace One Day, whose efforts make society function better, because when society functions better, businesses ultimately do better too,” says Polman.

Polman is working with Peace One Day alongside Innocent Drinks co-founder Richard Reed, Ocado co-founder Jason Gissing and brands including F1 Lotus and Skype (see ‘Brands on peace’, page 13).

Cynics may question how much impact one day of peace will have, but in 2007 Gilley achieved what many thought was impossible by persuading the Taliban in Afghanistan to stop fighting for 24 hours. As a result of the ceasefire, aid workers were able to enter areas normally plagued by violence and 1.4 million children were immunised against polio in the months that followed.

“It was a beautiful moment,” says Gilley. “I knew if we could get people to stop fighting in one of the most complex places in the world, we could save lives and be optimistic about peace.”

Celebrity ambassadors

The Taliban ceasefire was only the start. Despite garnering the support of world figures such as Kofi Annan, Nelson Mandela and the Dalai Lama, and persuading celebrities such as Jude Law and Angelina Jolie to spread the word, Gilley says he will not be satisfied until Peace Day has been embedded in the thinking of “every human being on the planet”.

To help change people’s behaviour he has called on both the skills of marketers and the power of brands.

“It’s like Mother’s Day,” he says. “Anna Jarvis had the idea in 1908 [unconnected with the Christian festival of Mothering Sunday] but it only became institutionalised many years later when the corporate sector got behind it.

“Now on Mother’s Day, we all change our behaviour. We visit our mum, send flowers, make sure dialogue is sensitive and no one is allowed to upset her. We’re noticing that the same is true on Peace Day. People are beginning to change their behaviour.”

Recognising the power and reach of big global brands beyond the traditional rattling of buckets for charitable donations, Gilley decided to seek long-term partnerships.

“You can’t help noticing the corporate branding on the side of Formula One cars,” he says. “It’s those logos that fund them to race,
MEASURING AWARENESS

Jeremy Gilley approaches the promotion of Peace Day like a classic marketer, focusing on partnerships to get maximum value for both parties.

“We’ve created the day, we’ve proved it can save lives and we know that when people are aware of it there’s a decrease in violence. We are working with the corporate sector to tell as many people as we can because we know that telling people that the day exists saves people’s lives,” he says.

More than 470 million people were aware of Peace Day 2013, a 68 per cent increase on 2012, according to analysis by McKinsey & Company. As a result, 2 per cent – eight million people – are estimated to have behaved more peacefully on 21 September 2013.

But the initiative is not all about a single day. The data shows that 73 per cent of the dialogue about Peace One Day happens throughout the rest of the year.

“It’s like climbing a mountain,” says Gilley. “The actual climb takes place on 21 September but all the preparation and training happens in the months before as you gear up for the day.”

Awareness is being driven through the work done by Peace One Day in the education and youth sectors of 197 countries. It reached 171 million people in 2013 through UN events, online games, Skype talks with the Peace One Day team and other activities with corporate partners.

The number of people that are aware of Peace Day is expected to reach 1.5 billion by the end of 2014.

“I think we will see three billion people aware of Peace Day by 2016,” says Gilley.

“So if corporations are interested in those numbers, we urge them to come forward because the corporate sector is key to the success of all of this.”

Alongside the advertising campaign for the Lynx Peace deodorant, the brand is encouraging young people to have a positive influence on their local communities.

Lynx has teamed with award-winning producer Naughty Boy and online fashion retailer Asos for the UK activation, which began on 15 April, and Unilever has been encouraging people around the world to raise money, donate time to good causes and act in a more positive way as part of the global campaign, explains Polman.

“In Australia we’ve had a big blood donation drive with the Australian Red Cross; in France we are encouraging young people to become peace ambassadors and make music videos; and in Brazil we are bringing competing nations together around the theme of peace,” he says.

“The corporate partnerships are focused on more than just fund-raising.

“It’s about what these brands do with their workforce,” says Gilley. “It’s about their consumers and it’s about the opportunity
When society functions better, businesses ultimately do better too

Paul Polman
Unilever

Financial formula
When formulating the financial structure of the Corporate Coalition, Gilley borrowed once more from Formula One, working with former head of sponsorship and marketing for the Williams racing team Jim Wright to build a more solid return-on-investment model for members.

Wright introduced a tiered subscription plan for corporates: $80,000 (£48,000) for bronze, $150,000 for silver and $250,000 for gold. Depending on the level of investment, brands receive image rights, filmed interviews, bespoke case studies and a number of personal appearances by Gilley for internal and external communications purposes. Gold members also receive ownership of a Peace One Day global initiative.

“For me, charity isn’t really the answer,” says Gilley. “It’s the concept of doing well by doing good. Businesses need to have an impact on the world; that’s what gets your workforce fired up and that’s what keeps them loyal. “Because the more money they make your company, the bigger difference that company can make in the world.”

Richard Reed, co-founder of Innocent Drinks, has long supported the Peace One Day effort and says being involved with the organisation has been “hugely good for driving employee engagement”.

“For Innocent to be playing a small part in what Peace One Day is achieving is incredibly motivational for people who work in the company,” he adds.

But there are other reasons to be involved, says Reed. “The left brain is doing it to drive awareness, brand experience and employee engagement, while the right brain is doing it because you believe in the mission and want to play a part in helping the world to become a less violent place.”

Gilley’s current focus is the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the Great Lakes.
region of Africa. Aided by a $10m donation from Howard G Buffett, the former director of the Coca-Cola Company, Peace One Day hopes to make a positive impact as part of a three-year campaign.

Using the power of celebrity once more, Gilley has recruited hip-hop star Akon, who he describes as “the Michael Jackson of Africa”, to perform at the annual Peace Day concert, which in past years has attracted artists such as Elton John, Bryan Adams, Pixie Lott, Annie Lennox and Lenny Kravitz. This year’s event will take place in Goma, a city in the east of the DRC.

“I knew when I went to the DRC and the Great Lakes region of Africa that Akon would be one way I could tell the entire country [about Peace Day],” says Gilley. “We’re doing a massive show that we could tell the entire country [about Peace Day],” says Gilley. “We’re doing a massive show that we

Winding down

Although it is rewarding for Gilley to know that his efforts are contributing to a more peaceful world, it is an emotional and sometimes harrowing job. To wind down, he spends time with his three-year-old daughter.

“The only time I completely shut off is when I spend time with my little girl. That’s when everything changes. I don’t allow any phone calls and it’s a phenomenal quality of time. For me, that’s when I’m free of everything,” says Gilley, who is also a keen wakeboarder and likes to have “a good old dance” to relax.

Gilley’s Peace One Day journey began through his work as a filmmaker and he has documented the evolution of the organisation since 1999 through films including Peace One Day and The Day After Peace.

He has recorded every meeting, event and landmark achievement, updating the story and informing people of his progress daily through social media.

“If you put a camera in the right place at the right time with the right question, it holds people accountable for their actions,” he says. “That’s the power of media.

“They used to say the pen is mightier than the sword but the camera is much mightier. It’s an awesome object that can help change the world.”