

LIGHT IN THE TUNNEL



THE NETHERLANDS Dark, creepy bicycle tunnels. An online campaign and social media blitz. Enthusiastic “tunnel champions”. They are all part of a successful Nuon viral campaign.



Nuon launched a campaign to bring light to the darkest four tunnels nominated by the public. It was so popular that local weatherman Piet Paulusma (in red) reported on the opening event.

TEXT David Scherpenhuizen

Dark, gloomy bicycle tunnels. They fill young children with dread and mothers with concern. Nuon has launched a tunnel make-over campaign to make them less menacing and it's a big hit with consumers. Ella Hollander, Team Leader Marketing Communications, describes the campaign. "The idea was to find a compelling image for our customers to express our new slogan: 'What may we change for you?' Energy enables positive change, transforming cold into warmth and darkness into light, and that's how we came up with the idea of using the image of a scary tunnel. We wanted to show that we don't just supply energy, but that we go the extra mile to contribute to society. The tunnel campaign embodies what we want our relationship to be with our customers: Their needs are central to everything we do and we can contribute to the public domain, as well as helping local communities."

Laura van Groeningen, Marketing Communication Advisor who is responsible for implementing the campaign, was immediately enthusiastic about the idea. "My first reaction was: 'Wow! This is a bullseye!' Everybody can relate to an unpleasant bike tunnel: Kids, as well as the elderly, use them daily. It's a rich visual image: These tunnels have an almost fairytale quality about them – they're almost like the deep, dark woods. And by illuminating them we are banishing the threat, restoring a sense of warmth and safety."

GREAT MEDIA EXPOSURE

The campaign included a pilot project to show the kind of renovations Nuon had in mind: better lighting, colourful murals, cleaning and other improvements. This was linked to a national campaign in newspapers, magazines and online.

A TOP FOUR PROJECT

Hannelore Boymanns was one of the most dedicated and inventive "tunnel lobbyists": "I had already set up a Facebook page about our local bicycle tunnel because a young woman was molested there recently. I have two children, a boy (16) and a girl (13), and the tunnel was always a worry. I don't let my daughter ride through it after dark. Someone on the Facebook page informed me of Nuon's campaign. I got all fired up and started lobbying online like crazy. It's wonderful that Nuon is tackling problems like these and contributing to our community!" Hannelore's tunnel is among the top four that will be renovated this year.

Hannelore Boymanns

Mother and tunnel lobbyist



Van Groeningen: "We asked people to nominate and lobby for scary tunnels in their neighbourhood, and to vote for them online. Interactivity was important because it emphasised our desire to have a dialogue with customers, to find out their needs so they don't just see us as an energy supplier but also as a potential partner for positive change."

The campaign's success exceeded Nuon's expectations. Van Groeningen: "We knew we were onto a good thing, but the response was overwhelming. People went wild and really entered into the spirit of things. Around 120 tunnels were nominated, with more than 75,000 votes for just the top four tunnels alone. Facebook pages were created and community groups were formed to lobby for their tunnels. They also got the local media involved. The campaign got an 87 per cent approval rate from the people surveyed."

Hollander adds: "It's too early to tell exactly, but the return on investment has been significant. The campaign was spotlighted in the weather report of Holland's most popular TV weatherman. It cost us 40,000 euros to get it on the show, but it generated approximately 250,000 euros in exposure."

Nuon has earmarked 10,000 euros for each of the top four tunnels. The renovations are scheduled for this year and will be planned in collaboration with the local municipality and community. Soon, thanks to Nuon, the light in these tunnels will be brighter than ever.

formulier.nuon.nl/tunnels/tunnel-actie



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