



Comisiynydd y
Gymraeg
Welsh Language
Commissioner

Creating effective bilingual marketing campaigns

November 2022

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

In the past, campaigns were commissioned, designed and created by the Food Standards Agency's (FSA) central Communications team in England. A request would arrive quite late in the process to translate the final product into Welsh. Sometimes, problems with translation (e.g. having to translate puns and English acronyms, or alliterating titles), or problems with the plan for promoting the Welsh version, would manifest themselves too late to be able to resolve them successfully.

From the organisation's point of view, this could lead to additional costs due to delays or having to redo work or commission additional services. From the point of view of the Welsh Language Unit (the Unit), the Welsh language element was not as good as it could have been because the Welsh language was not sufficiently considered from the outset.

What triggered the change?

There was a desire to ensure that a robust process was in place for creating bilingual campaigns, to avoid problems and ensure that the final product was of the best possible quality and reached the widest possible target audience in both languages.

What were the obstacles that needed to be dealt with?

There were a variety of different factors that could disrupt the process of creating bilingual campaigns:

- An external contractor commissioned to create the campaign, without a brief containing enough emphasis on the need to create a bilingual campaign and all the related considerations;
- Assumption by other teams that campaigns and the basic creative concepts would translate easily and mechanically from English to Welsh;

- Copy and scripts difficult to translate, relying on inappropriate or ambiguous words or cultural situations that were too specific to England, without considering whether it would be suitable for Wales;
- 30 second videos created in English, but with Welsh being naturally longer it would be necessary to cut a few words or sentences, and doing so under time pressure, which could lead to mistakes;
- Resources designed in a way that did not support bilingualism, for example advertising banners for websites, where these should have been bilingual;
- A communication plan focusing on media or platforms that did not support the use of Welsh, e.g. advertisements between podcasts.

In essence, because the requirements in terms of the Welsh language were not considered from the start, problems could manifest themselves at every stage of the process, and without much time to resolve them.

IMPLEMENT THE NEW PROCESS

What were the steps put in place to initiate the change?

- Including a member of the Unit's staff on the campaign's Project Board from the outset, together with a member of the Wales Communications team, that leads to fostering strong relationships between the Unit and those who create campaigns;
- The Unit drawing up the Welsh language requirements to be included in the campaign brief, so that everyone working on the campaign is aware of them, including any external contractors;
- Consulting with the Unit at every stage of the process so that they can see the creative ideas, the design, the images etc., and can identify any elements that might not work as well in Welsh, or suggest equivalent options which can be used specifically in Wales;
- Co-drafting the Welsh and English content side by side, in order to create meaningful, idiomatic, natural headings and text in Welsh and avoid having to translate in a hurry;
- Working with the Wales Communications team to create a specific communication plan for Wales, and identify suitable partners in Wales who can share the campaigns on behalf of the FSA, and target Welsh speaking audiences.
- The Unit working proactively on each element making it as easy as possible for the Welsh element to be created. The Unit does as much as possible ourselves, including:
 - Translating all elements;
 - Approving and casting Welsh actors for television and radio advertisements;
 - Liaising directly with designers and typesetters to ensure the quality of the Welsh resources;

- Uploading the FSA's Welsh language resources and campaigns to the website;
- Managing the FSA's own Welsh social media accounts, uploading all the campaign resources, posting the messages, and sharing any retweets etc.

Influencing managers and receiving consent at a higher level

The consent of the Communications department's managers was required. The obvious common ground was taken advantage of – namely the desire to create creative, effective campaigns and share the FSA's vital public health messages with the widest possible audience, ensuring the greatest value for money.

There were discussions at a high level about paying for the Welsh language element. As the working arrangements mean that the campaign is developed as one campaign with two media, (rather than an English campaign, and the translation is a separate step at the end of the process), there was a strong case for agreeing that the central budget for the campaign should be used to cover both languages.

Was it necessary to organise and conduct training at all?

All members of the Unit's staff needed to receive training to become web editors, to use the platforms for managing the social media accounts, and the Canva website to create Welsh resources where necessary. This was done internally by the digital team, and uploading Welsh content to the website and social media is now a significant part of the Unit's work. The Unit also helps to plan and create content for the social media that links to Welsh culture.

Relevant members of staff also received media training so that they could conduct bilingual interviews with the press if there was interest in the campaign.

What are the practical arrangements of the new process?

With each campaign, the Unit follows the following steps:

- Appointing a member of the Unit's staff to lead the Welsh language element of each campaign, and be part of the Project Board;
- Joint drafting of Welsh and English, identifying any problems that arise from the outset;
- The Unit working practically with the designers and the creative agencies on the Welsh language element;
- Agreeing on a communication plan with the Wales Communications team to seize opportunities to engage with the Welsh speaking audience;
- Uploading campaign materials to website and social media accounts.

A continuous effort is made to maintain the working relationship with colleagues in the Communications teams. The Unit holds a session with all new members of Communications staff who start at the FSA, to explain the requirements of the language scheme, the way we work with the team on campaigns, and what will be required for them to do in terms of the Welsh language as part of their job.

It is advantageous that three of the four members of staff in our communications team are Welsh speakers. The FSA has implemented a Bilingual Skills Strategy, and at least one of the positions in the Communications team has been identified as 'Welsh essential', to ensure that a bilingual member of the Communications team is always available to steer discussions and advise on the requirements of Wales and the Welsh language. The other positions have been identified as 'Welsh desirable' and the FSA places great value on bilingual skills when recruiting.

IMPACT

What is the impact of the new process?

There is now a clear, established process for creating bilingual campaigns. Every element of the campaign is considered and planned, and there is an opportunity for the Unit to discuss alternative options that will work well in Wales if necessary – e.g. finding specific Welsh influencers for specific campaigns. No decisions will be made about the Welsh language element without seeking the opinion, advice and expertise of the Unit.

What are the main successes and benefits of the plan?

This working practice enables the FSA to create comprehensive, effective and natural bilingual campaigns, which reach a wide audience, take advantage of a variety of media, and treat Welsh and English equally.

The FSA's vital messages about food safety and hygiene are communicated effectively in Wales to people in their language of choice. In addition to the positive impact on public health, the hope is that these bilingual campaigns foster the trust of the Welsh public in the FSA's provision, and show that the FSA is a body that respects its Welsh-speaking audience.

Is there evidence showing value for money/time?

The FSA does not routinely monitor value for money/time statistics in connection with Welsh language campaigns. Most of the data collected monitors the reach of campaigns in Wales, covering both languages. The FSA's opinion is that it is not possible to determine the 'value' of the Welsh language based on such data. The bilingual campaigns are an essential part of the FSA's effort to communicate its health messages to the public in the most effective way for people in Wales, part of their commitment to their bilingual corporate identity in Wales.

However, the FSA is considering ways to collect more data on the reach of campaigns from now on, looking at the reach of the Welsh language element as part

of that. The FSA knows, for example, that the 'click rate' on a Welsh-language video produced for the recent 'Registration of Food Business' campaign, is three times higher than the rate for the English-language video in England.

EVALUATING

Are there further improvements to be made and is there anything the FSA would do differently next time?

The FSA is about to contract an external PR company to carry out an audit of our social media in order to evaluate how effective our bilingual content, approach and platforms are at the moment, how we can improve on our bilingual content and to highlight best practice in the field, especially from other similar organisations.

What factors, in the FSA's opinion, are transferable if another organisation were to consider adopting or adapting a similar process?

Cultivating a solid working relationship with the Communications department that produces the campaigns and asking for an invitation to be part of the project board is key. By now the Unit is included without having to ask and the Welsh language is an integral part of the planning from the very beginning.

It has also been vitally important to foster the abilities and technical skills that the Unit needs to be able to work on these campaigns in a practical and proactive way, without having to ask other teams.

COMMISSIONER'S OPINION

The Commissioner is of the opinion that it is key that organisations plan their public campaigns with the Welsh language as a central consideration from the outset. As well as providing reassurance to users, bilingual materials can also increase the visibility of the Welsh language and motivate people who would otherwise use English to give Welsh a try.

In the Commissioner's advice document relating to promoting the use of Welsh language services¹, it is stated that organisations should take a number of specific steps when planning and developing a promotional campaign:

- Identify audiences
- Formulate an effective message
- Use effective and reliable messengers
- Selecting suitable communication methods; and
- Be interactive

¹ [Promoting the use of Welsh language services \(welshlanguagecommissioner.wales\)](https://www.welshlanguagecommissioner.wales/)

The Commissioner is looking forward to seeing other organisations proactively planning creative and effective promotional campaigns, with the Welsh language at their centre.