

# Gum Litter Taskforce : Creating a stigma to influence a positive change in behaviour

In an era when so many brands are using their marketing to break down societal barriers and eradicate out-dated stigmas, we had to create one to force a positive change in behaviour.

Everyone knows what it's like to step on chewing gum left in the street. And everyone hates it!! Latest figures show that 40% of Irish people chew gum regularly (57% for those under 25 years), and the reality is that only a very small minority actually drop their gum on the ground.

Ibec's Gum Litter Taskforce challenged MediaCom to change the behaviour of this final, small group of consumers who inappropriately dispose of their chewing gum.

Like all litter, inappropriately disposing of gum is wrong. Most people know this, and act accordingly through their own choice or by aligning to social norms. Yet, there are still some people who find this endogenous, functional and essentially unfulfilling. And beyond this are those that are willing to take the risk of a fine and just dump their gum anywhere that's handy. While society does not like it, it also does not judge this behaviour harshly enough to influence it to change in anyway.

Our solution was to create a greater stigma around dropping gum on the street. We applied "The Isolation Effect", a behavioural economics technique used to create more meaningful and memorable memory structures by making something stand out from the norm. Through this method we centred more of the campaign messaging on the point of incidence. Polarising this behaviour in the streets increased general negative sentiment towards it, building up a greater stigma around gum litter.

This required an overhaul of the communication mix. Out-of-Home and mobile targeting became the lead channels. Gum litter blackspots were identified and upweighted with a ubiquitous presence. On-street experiential activity, media partnerships, local council community engagement and social media allowed for public participation and to put a spotlight on real-life bad behaviour.

As a result of this campaign 93% of the Irish population now consider dropping chewing on the ground as littering, and more importantly over 50% of those who use to drop their chewing gum on the ground now dispose of it properly – by binning it when they're done.

(Source: Kantar Millward Brown 2018).

## MEDIA