



How do you hate?

BACKGROUND: The Future of Hate Stop HB757 campaign was created with one goal in mind: to show people via satire the very real threat caused by HB757 and get the governor of Georgia, Nathan Deal, to veto the Religious Liberties bill. (Shorty, 2017) The bill had passed both the house and senate of the Georgia legislature and would have allowed businesses open to the public to discriminate and refuse service or employment to individuals based on “sincerely held religious beliefs”. (Picchi, 2016) It would have impacted the 300,000 LGBTQ adults and 58,200 LGBTQ youth in the state of Georgia. (Mallory et al., 2017, pg. 1) The campaign, headed by Brandon George of DigitasLBI of Atlanta, was created on behalf of Lost N Found Youth (LNFY), a nonprofit helping LGBTQ teens in the Atlanta area. (Shorty, 2017)



TARGET AUDIENCE: DigitasLBI and LNFY wanted to target people who could make a difference. They focused voters, and political and social influencers in the state of Georgia who could contact the governor and ask him to veto the bill. (Shorty, 2017) Involvement of these groups as a voice in the state was critical, as there was great deal of pressure from opposition such as the Faith and Freedom Coalition and Georgia Baptist Mission Board, which amassed 1.3 million members to support the bill. (Bluestein, 2016) Pressure was also being applied by corporate interests such as Disney, the NFL and NCAA, who opposed the bill. In short, it mattered that the governor heard from the people of his state, not just outside interests if the bill were to be vetoed. (Picchi, 2016)



FORMATIVE RESEARCH: Formative research for this campaign extended to information provided to DigitasLBI from the client Lost N Found Youth and research of contact information for the governor of Georgia. Contact with Brandon George confirmed this as a “seat-of-the-pants” campaign done without formal research.



We don't discriminate.
We just sell high-quality discrimination signs to people who do.



CAMPAIGN MESSAGE: Brandon George, Associate Creative Director of DigitasLBI on the project, called the agency’s approach “Satire for Social Change.” (George, 2016) To emphasize the impact HB757 would have if signed into law, DigitasLBI of Atlanta created a fake sign company, 4A Graphics of Georgia, complete with company website, voicemail and email, which offered discriminatory signs for sale for all possible needs – all of which would be legal under HB757. Each sign, when clicked on via the company website, led directly to a call to action to tell Governor Deal to veto the bill along with his contact information and a link to email him. The agency used thousands of flyers, distributed throughout Atlanta, along with Craigslist ads, inflammatory postings offering the signs for sale on social media, and attention of the media, to get exposure for the fake company and get people to click and contact the governor. All tweets were hashtagged #HB757 to increase exposure. The sign designs were deliberately crafted to “harken back to the days of segregation and Jim Crow laws that legalized discrimination.” (Shorty, 2017)

According to Brandon George, “Our goal was to give people (especially Governor Nathan Deal) a satirical—and very scary—look into Georgia’s future with HB757 on the books. In other words, yes the signs are fake, but the consequences would be very real.” (George, 2017)



PROJECT STATS:

- **52,000 website hits on day one**
- **8,000 click-throughs to the call for action**
- **1.7 million shares, views and retweets**
- **2 million media impressions**
(Shorty, 2017)
- **\$6,000 raised for Lost N Found Youth via GoFundMe** (George, 2017)
- **Numerous awards**

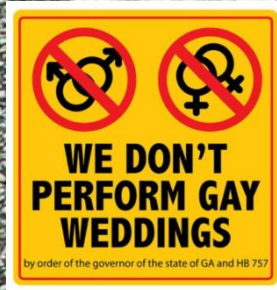
PROJECT EVALUATION: The fliers and inflammatory nature of the signs did the trick to capture people's attention and get them to react. On just the first day the website received over 52,000 hits and hundreds of angry phone calls on voicemail and eventually had web traffic from more than 55 countries, which had a 23% return rate for visitors. It resulted in 8,000 click-throughs to send the Georgia governor, Nathan Deal, email requesting him to veto HB757. Media coverage of people's outrage and broadcasting the signs earned the campaign another two million media impressions, including major networks and retweets by celebrities like Montel Williams (Williams, 2016) and influential CEO's like Paul Polman of Unilever. (Shorty, 2017)

In review, Brandon George's plan to use the signs as a means to evoke action worked. It hit all the points in the Hierarchy of Effects. The signs and negative coverage of them hit the **Think** level by causing people to become aware of the implications of HB757 and gain a deeper knowledge of how the bill might impact their state. It got them to **Feel** outrage and encouraged their liking and preference to oppose the bill. Finally it got them to **Do** something about it by causing them to form a conviction and then act upon that conviction by contacting the governor to veto the bill.

THEORETICAL APPLICATION: While the agency did not specify using in particular theory, there are several which apply equally well to this unusual campaign. The first is **Cognitive Dissonance theory**, which states that if people are confronted with information that logically does not meet with their beliefs, but is irrefutable, they will change either behavior or beliefs in order to reestablish balance between the situation and their conflict. In this case, using signs in a southern state that smacked of "Jim Crow" and segregation touched a nerve provoking strong responses in the intended audience and giving them a strong motivation to respond to the call to action of reaching out to the governor. (University of Twente, 2017)

In 1991 Noelle-Neumann put forth the **Spiral of Silence theory**. In this theory those who believe their opinion is not in the majority feel pressure not to speak out, and as pressure opposing them builds, the less they tend to speak out. Likewise, when a minority opinion is voiced and begins to escalate in public opinion, those in the minority feel empowered to speak out more. In driving people to take a stance against HB757, DigitasLbi gave the LGTBO minority in the state of Georgia more empowerment to speak out about the discriminatory law that had been passed by both houses of the Georgia legislature. (University of Twente, 2017)

The third theory that could be applied to this campaign is that of **Altercasting**. In tact altercasting an audience is forced into a role as a means of persuasion which causes them to behave in opposition to that role. In the case of this campaign, it could be argued that audiences were forced into the position of being discriminators by seeing the flyers advertising signs that aligned with the potential outcomes in a future where HB757 became law. It was one thing to see them advertise against LGBTQ, but the signs which advertised discrimination against Muslims, Jews and Christians, made it clear that this law had universal application and wasn't merely an exercise in religious freedom, but a means to legally discriminate against any group at any time, on the basis of religion. (University of Twente, 2017)



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