

# WHAT'S IN A PITCH?

TELLING YOUR WORKMATES THAT YOU WEAR LYNX CHOCOLATE BODY SPRAY AND EAT MARMITE EVERY DAY ISN'T THE USUAL REQUIREMENT FOR WORKING ON AN AUDIT PITCH. *HIGHLIGHTS* TALKS TO THE UNILEVER GLOBAL AUDIT TEAM ABOUT HOW THEY DELIVERED THE 'WOW' FACTOR TO SECURE THIS MAJOR WIN AND ROSE TO THE LOGISTICAL CHALLENGE OF BEING READY TO START AUDIT WORK IN JANUARY.



Look closer: How many household favourites can you spot?

**O**n any given day, two billion people use Unilever products. Selling more than 400 brand names worldwide, the consumer goods giant has established an outstanding reputation for doing business sustainably.

"Faced with a client of this calibre, it was clear from the outset that we would need to have an audit proposal with a real 'wow' factor," says Bronwen Olivier, who worked on developing the strategy approach for the audit. "The more we delved into the detail of the planning, the more it brought home to us the scale of its business."

Unilever's desire to appoint a new auditor from 1 January 2014 meant the team had just three months to put together KPMG's bid. It was time to burn the midnight oil as the team clocked up long hours in a project room to meet deadlines.

"It was quite intense at times and all-consuming but also one of those really positive team experiences where our mood was infected by the possibility of winning," says Saira Ahmad-Yaneza, who was also involved in developing the audit strategy with Bronwen. "But it wasn't just unrelenting effort, we also had a lot of fun along the way and forged some great relationships."

#### Getting under the skin

Unilever had made clear its desire to work with a firm that readily understood the importance of values in business with an authentic commitment to sustainable business.

Chris Walters, whose remit included gathering information from across the firm which would inform the team's approach, says: "We knew that as a firm we already had a lot of great relationships with Unilever and reviewed past and on-going services to understand how we could incorporate that knowledge and experience into our audit to make it as valuable as possible. That process really helped to coalesce our thinking about how we wanted the audit to feel and how it would fit with Unilever's corporate ethos."

Excited by the prospect of pitching to such a well-known household name, everyone in the team immersed themselves in all things Unilever. Getting into the spirit of the occasion, the catering team kindly agreed to keep

a fridge in the project room stocked with Ben & Jerry's ice cream "which was perfect for those moments when you were flagging and in need of inspiration or needed to recover from a stressful moment," says Ian Anderson, who played a pivotal role in assessing and ensuring our independence.

With the creative juices well and truly flowing, the team willingly sacrificed their dignity to appear in some light-hearted caricatures and developed a rich picture for use in the pitch discussions summing up the essence of the audit and the way in which they wanted to work with Unilever.

The project rapidly extended to a video showcasing the passion KPMG people have for Unilever products in far-flung locations such as India, Turkey, Singapore, São Paulo, Durban and New York, which the team shared with Unilever.

And, in a collaboration with Canada Square's Fourteen restaurant, the team also produced four flavours of special KPMG ice cream inspired by Unilever's products.

"We had a lot of fun with this at one of the client sessions – asking everyone in the client team to taste the different flavours and vote for their favourite," says Saira.

#### An independent view

Demonstrating that KPMG could be independent by the proposed audit start date was one of the most important challenges on the proposal. The team had to review the scope of work for all services provided to Unilever globally for the last three years to understand what it would mean for our independence and what actions would be needed if we did win the work.

"It turned out to be hundreds of projects across 55 countries, involving around 200 engagement partners – it was incredibly challenging," says Ian.

Any services that would be prohibited for the auditor to provide were monitored by the team to make sure they would complete in time or that the scope of work could be changed to enable them to continue. This just wasn't possible in some cases, so the team had to develop a transition plan to allow Unilever to transfer some services to other providers in the event of KPMG being successful.

## THE NUMBERS

1,400

THE TEAM HAD TO READ THROUGH MORE THAN 1,400 DOCUMENTS AS PART OF THE FIRST DISCOVERY SESSION WITH UNILEVER;

12

BUT THE FINAL PROPOSAL DOCUMENT HAD TO BE LIMITED TO JUST 12 PAGES;

650 / 210

SOME 650 ENGAGEMENTS WITH 210 ENGAGEMENT PARTNERS ACROSS 55 COUNTRIES HAD TO BE REVIEWED TO IDENTIFY THE IMPACT ON OUR INDEPENDENCE;

130,000

UNILEVER'S 2014 AUDIT WILL BE ACROSS 90 COUNTRIES, INVOLVING HUNDREDS OF KPMG AUDIT TEAM MEMBERS AND AN ESTIMATED 130,000 HOURS OF TIME.



On film: Ian  
Anderson and Saira  
Ahmad-Yaneza.

It rapidly became clear that KPMG would need to exit a small number of engagements immediately and, irrespective of the outcome of the audit tender, some outsourcing operations in Pakistan, some project management office activities in India and some payroll services in Ghana.

"Not only were those services restricted under audit independence rules but Unilever classed them as having a high business continuity risk," says Ian.

"Very early on in the independence review process, Unilever took the decision that it didn't want to wait for the outcome to be known and to transfer those services to a new supplier rather than run any risks.

"Immediately, there was a commercial cost to continuing but the teams in those countries were incredibly supportive in helping us make the necessary changes. Aside from those tough commercial decisions, there was also considerable upheaval for Unilever in having to switch, so it was critical to go the extra mile in making things as simple as possible for the company."

Meanwhile, with the deadline clock ticking and the Global Independence Group pitching in with support from Frankfurt, Hong Kong and Melbourne, Ian and his colleagues worked their way through a host of conversations with colleagues around the world. This included engagement partners, risk management teams and some office senior partners, as well as daily meetings and calls with Unilever.

"There was a fairly heavy logistical element to it all and we had to be really flexible to ensure we hit all the deadlines," says Ian. "On the day we had to submit all our transition plans, we split the team in two to tackle all the different time zones and had some starting at 6am to be able to phone countries such as Australia, Singapore and the Philippines, with the rest taking the afternoon shift to catch places like the United States. We also had people on standby to fly out to locations where we might have any challenges likely to jeopardise the process. Joe Annandsingh had his suitcase packed for an entire week ready to fly to India."

Bronwen adds: "It's important to recognise that the core team really just represents the tip of the iceberg in terms of who was involved.

"We couldn't have done it without the support of the many colleagues in the business who provided advice, stepped in to take over our existing work commitments so we could free up time to work on the tender and cheered us on every step of the way. It was an incredible team effort."



## THE ICE CREAM CHALLENGE

**“We were delighted to have the opportunity to create something unique for Unilever,” says Chef David Nelson, who was hard at work in the kitchens of Canada’s Square’s Fourteen restaurant when *Highlights* caught up with him.**

Inspired by products as diverse as fabric conditioner, face scrub and tea, David and his colleagues brainstormed recipe ideas, eventually producing four fabulous flavours, which the pitch team asked Unilever to vote on.

The team had such great feedback from the client that they wanted to share some of the ice cream with KPMG colleagues and asked if it would be possible to produce more – which could also raise some funds for our national charity partners at the same time.

“The next thing we knew, it was all hands to the pump to produce 1,200 tubs of ice cream,” says David. “We weren’t able to produce such a large quantity so quickly in the kitchen but we managed to find a great ice cream manufacturer able to take our recipes and produce it for us.”

The ice cream went on sale in our largest offices during November, with luscious lavender flavour proving the firm favourite, while mustard ice cream provoked something of a love/hate reaction.

“It was a very enjoyable process and very satisfying to know that we had been able to play a part in helping the business,” says David.

**Contact Barrie Davies in the KPMG workplace team if you are looking for some inspiration with your client project.**



Ice to see you:  
Bronwen Olivier,  
Chris Walters and  
chef David Nelson.