

CSIS 'The Box'

Nominated:
PR Week Award – Corporate Comms



The container shipping industry is the engine of world trade. Who knew? We had a remit to bring this message to the world, a tough job considering the industry is characterised by over 25 fiercely competitive lines. Our most high profile move was making the humble container box a star.

Our research confirmed that world knew little about the industry, yet the same research hinted people knew it was hugely important, just not why.

The humble box was identified as the central motif of the communications strategy. By associating it with a range of essential consumer goods – iPods, wine, pineapples, computers and more – the plan was to create relevance to the outside world.

There was no mouthpiece for the industry aimed at the man on the street, no communications infrastructure, little publicly available information, and nothing for the outside world to hang onto. A programme was designed that fell into two distinct phases – Creating a Voice and Speaking Out.

Creating a voice (August 2007-January 2008):

Communicators were nominated from eight of the leading lines to form a steering committee and a bridge into the industry. Working with this group we put the basics in place first:

- We created an official mouthpiece for the industry – The Container Shipping Information Service (CSIS). This included registering it as a legal entity, nominating a chairman and vice chairman and setting out a Code of Conduct and Rules of Engagement
- We clarified the vision, communications strategy, programme of activity and evaluation metrics
- We identified and networked with industry allies and stakeholders
- We developed a visual identity (based on the box motif) and messaging that would be used throughout all communications
- We engaged Porter Novelli hub offices in the US and South East Asia to facilitate global and regional outreach
- We instigated quantitative research in key markets to establish a benchmark

Speaking Out (January 2008 – present):

CSIS was launched officially in January 2008 with:

- A media conference and one-on-one briefings held with media from the three top regional hubs. Chief targets were opinion former and shipping media, with an international focus
- We created a public website (www.shipsandboxes.com) as a central information resource for public and media. It went live on the same day as the media launch



Since launch, the story of the humble box has travelled in to the pages, onto the screen and onto the airwaves of 400+ influential media and digital channels worldwide. These include:

- *The Financial Times*
- *Straits Times*
- *CNBC Asia*
- *The Guardian*
- *El Sol de Mexico*
- *European Voice*
- *Taiwan News*
- *China News*
- *Irish Times*
- BBC World, BBC 1 Breakfast, News at 6/10, Radio 5 Live, Working Lunch, World Service Radio, bbc.co.uk



Most recently, the outreach has culminated in 'The Box' – a multi-platform partnership with the BBC. Launched in September 2008, this involved the tracking of a BBC-branded container on its year long journey around the world to highlight the role of the container in enabling world trade. With a GPS tracker on-board, the public can track the box's progress via bbc.co.uk/thebox until summer 2009. There are associated blogs, photographic competitions and educational materials, links to the CSIS website and periodic BBC updates on UK and global channels.

The CSIS website has been developed since launch and enhanced with educational materials, animation graphics and two-way links with bbc.co.uk. The site is now ranked number one on Google searches for information about container shipping.

The communications objectives of creating media and digital awareness of the industry and its role in daily life are being met. Current estimates of the global coverage circulation are over 400 million.