

World Turning:
The Arcadis Sustainable Cities Index

International Building Press Communication and PR Awards 2015
Best Business Communications Campaign

Brief & Objectives

Arcadis is a global natural and built asset design & consultancy firm – supporting clients in over 40 countries to deliver exceptional and sustainable outcomes through design, consultancy, engineering, project and management services.

In 2014 Arcadis identified cities as offering a major opportunity for growth and invested in a sales drive targeted at urban centres globally. Whilst well known in its Dutch homeland, Arcadis had little brand awareness or global credibility in the urban arena outside its existing client relationships. It needed to take a bold position in order to be recognised as a leading player.

As a result, the campaign needed to:

1. **Raise awareness** of their urban development capabilities on a global scale.
2. **Build brand ownership** in relation to urban sustainability.
3. **Generate conversations** with senior city planners and policymakers – providing them with rich data and engaging content.

Strategy & Creativity

In response to this challenge Arcadis aimed to generate demand for the urban development team by creating a direct call to action for their sustainability and urban planning services.

We had three key challenges to overcome:

1. **Sustainability fatigue:** the campaign needed to identify a fresh angle in a well-worn area.
2. **Global difference:** the campaign needed to be globally relevant while accurately reflecting specific challenges faced locally.
3. **Elusive audience:** the campaign needed to inspire action in a notoriously hard-to-reach group.

Our strategy was to benchmark the performance of urban environments in relation to people and profit as well as planet. We aimed to meet campaign objectives in four ways:

“The Sustainable Cities Index not only benchmarks individual places today but offers a roadmap for future improvements. I offer the appreciation and thanks of the partners of the World Urban Campaign for Arcadis’ foresight and wisdom in crafting this report. It will provide a strong basis for helping the world’s cities reach their highest potential.”

Dr Eugenie Birch, Chair, World Urban Campaign & UN-Habitat



A bold hypothesis: Reframe the debate about urban sustainability – uncovering the true state of urban sustainability according to the ‘triple bottom line’.

Grounded in data: Ground the campaign in rich data – creating an index ranking to generate city-by-city relevance and to enable global contrast and comparison.

Supported by insight: Drill down into specific indicators of sustainability – identifying clear areas for improvement and practical solutions to appeal to target audiences.

Integrated execution: Develop compelling, shareable content – empowering Arcadis’ global team with tailored, packaged collateral and engaging external audiences across marketing channels.

Method Deployed

Arcadis devised the Sustainable Cities Index (SCI) to bring new life to the sustainability debate – assessing for the first time the performance of 50 cities worldwide according to a ‘triple bottom line’ and incorporating 20 separate indicators.

The research was compiled by economic think-tank the Centre for Economic and Business Research, with insight collected across Arcadis’ business to explain what this meant to city executives.

Arcadis engaged communications consultancy Man Bites Dog to develop a compelling global narrative from the SCI data – telling the story in an impactful, globally relevant way. We generated worldwide appeal by proving that global cities fail to balance the three pillars of sustainability and brought this to life through multimedia content and a unified visual identity. We created an online hub (www.sustainablecitiesindex.com) which hosted a 32-page whitepaper, animated videographic, infographic and allowed users to interrogate SCI data and compare the performance of cities like-for-like.

Collateral was delivered to Arcadis’ local marketers and urban development team leaders worldwide to support direct marketing activity. Arcadis’ local teams and media relations partners also conducted a full-scale global press and social media launch.

Results

The SCI has proven a game-changing campaign. The most successful global marketing campaign in Arcadis' history, it has far exceeded all targets and delivered against each core objective.

Awareness:

The SCI delivered incredible coverage worldwide.

350 pieces of high-profile coverage globally:

- **120+** in Asia Pacific – including the Hong Kong Economic Times, Oriental Daily & Bloomberg TV
- **70+** in Europe – including a live interview on CNBC and local pieces with Journal Frankfurt & De Standaard (NL)
- **50+** in the Middle East – including the Dubai Eye Business Radio & The National
- **30+** in the UK – including a full-page piece in the Daily Telegraph
- **30+** in North & Latin America – including Fast Company, Huffington Post & El Dinamo

Unprecedented online interaction:

- Over **6,000** report downloads – beating our target by **900%**
- Over **50,000** unique visitors from more than **30** countries to the microsite in the six weeks following launch
- **15,500+** video hits – 8 times our original target
- **10,000** social media referrals

The videographic was also included in the top ten of The Independent's i100 on the day of launch.

Ownership:

The campaign has allowed Arcadis to own the 360° sustainable view of global cities. The SCI has been credited as leading the field of urban sustainability research – gaining hard-won endorsements from the Chair of UN-Habitat's World Urban Campaign.

London's ranking also prompted a response from the Mayor of London.

Conversations:

The SCI is the key business development platform Arcadis' urban development team needed and has already generated several meetings with senior officials in key target cities. In following up these leads Arcadis was able to track over \$24million in potential fees to its sales pipeline.

Direct contact was also made with the Carbon Disclosure Project, economic development department for Kuala Lumpur, Rotterdam Mayor's office, numerous academics, students, NGOs, bloggers and influencers.

Engagement:

Multimedia content empowered Arcadis' local teams. 13 different spokespeople across the world were quoted in the media and such is the level of global buy-in that the central marketing team is looking to rollout local language microsites.

"The Sustainable Cities Index exceeded all expectations. It was a first for Arcadis and has opened up a host of opportunities for us to engage with city influencers, developers and policy makers to help inform the future of their cities. The PR and Marketing team were central to its success, from initiating the idea, shaping the research, presenting the content and making a big splash in the market, they really made it work!"

John Batten, Global Cities Director, Arcadis

Additional Information

People

Arcadis team: John Batten, Andy Rowlands, Lauren Cavender, Nathanael Moyers
Man Bites Dog team: Alex Kent, Rebecca Parish, Rosie Murphy

Contractors

Research: Data by Cebr. Analysis by Arcadis experts.
Report: Text by Cebr and Arcadis. Art direction by Man Bites Dog. Production by Pixeldot.
Microsite: Concept and art direction by Man Bites Dog. Production by Pixeldot.
Infographic: Concept and art direction by Man Bites Dog. Production by Pixeldot.
Videographic: Concept and art direction by Man Bites Dog. Production by Progress Film. Voiceover by January Brown.
Media relations: Arcadis global PR team supported by external agencies: Blue Rubicon (UK), Fleishman-Hillard (Hong Kong & Asia Pacific), Minz & Hoke (US).



