

FAT LAD AT THE BACK

FAT C*N'T CASE STUDY

IT'S NOT BORING. PINKY PROMISE.

2022

**MELLOR
& SMITH**



**FAT LAD
AT THE
BACK**

PROFANITY WARNING.

IF YOU'RE OF A SENSITIVE NATURE THIS
CASE STUDY CONTAINS THE WORD CUNT.
BUT NOT BECAUSE WE LIKE IT. NOOOO, WE
DID IT BECAUSE WE HAD TO. LET'S BEGIN...

Fat Lad - A brand that stands by its community, through thick and thin. Proper.

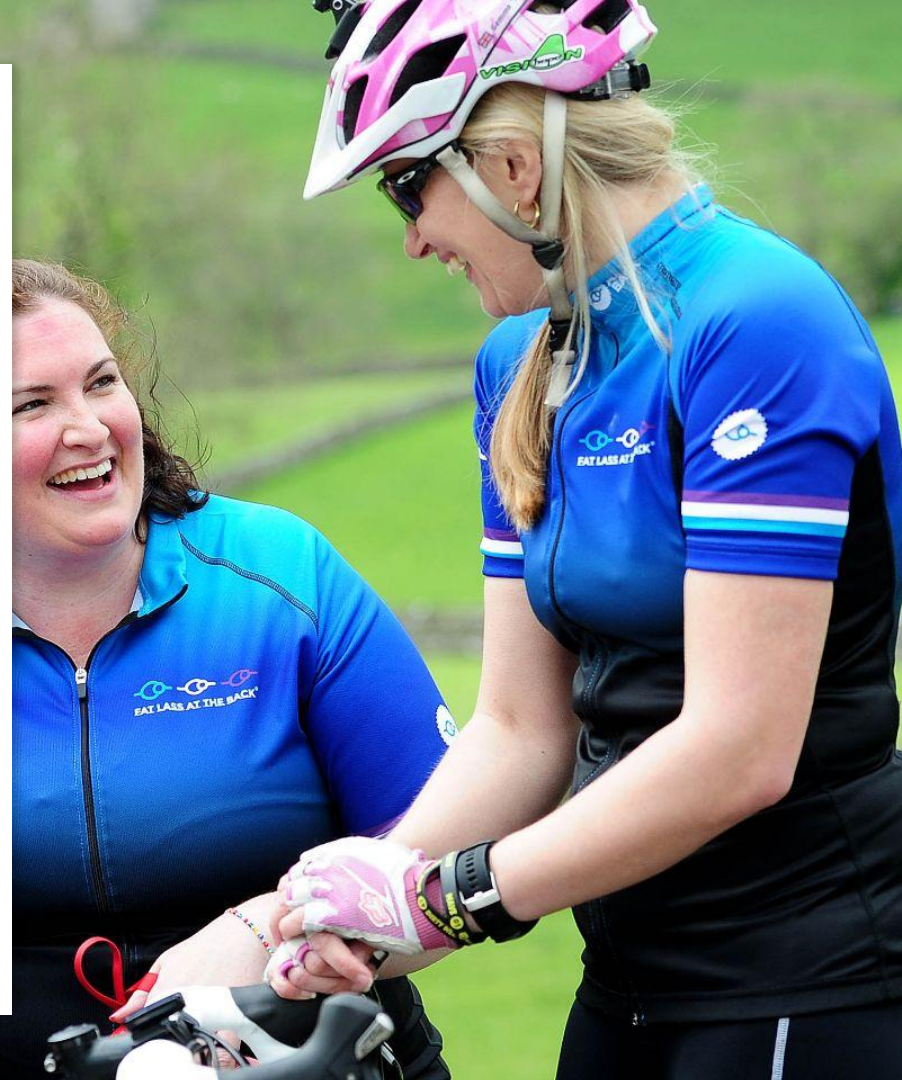
Fat Can't is our second campaign for Fat Lad at The Back. Fat Lad makes top quality cycling gear for lads and lasses of all sizes, from small to 8XL.

This campaign had a different aim to the first campaign *Time to Change Gear*. Yes, it had to build brand. But more than that, we needed to demonstrate Fat Lad stands with a particular person. And it's a person who doesn't usually have brands standing with them.

Nasty names

It calls out the truth about the way cyclists get treated, the ones who don't have a classic cyclists physique. Because overweight Fat Lads get called some pretty nasty things.

We ran some research among the **60,000-strong** Fat Lad Facebook community. We asked them... did they get abused by the bystander on the street? You bet your bollocks they do. It happens **a lot**.



Say whaaaat?

Larger cyclists get called names

And the overwhelmingly majority get called a 'Fat Cunt'. By strangers. Bystanders. Randomly. (*warning; this profanity gets used a LOT in this campaign. Aunties, look away now*). It's not nice.

People know they're being called a Fat Cunt, but they don't know others are too. There's a unity, a bond that binds them... but they don't know others exist!

Turn it on its head

This sounds like a bad thing, but let's spin it on its head. We thought, what if we could bring it to life and show others also get called a fat cunt.

Well if we could do that, then we could demonstrate Fat Lad stands with YOU, the guy or the girl who's being called a fat cunt.

An idea started brewing

The public tend to write off fat people. With a dismissive "Nah - you can't ride to the top of the hill, you're too fat." But fat people actually can, and they do.

It doesn't look very flattering. Fatties still look like fatties.

I recently got abused, the bloke in a 4x4 sped passed me and shouted FAT C... at which point I Shouted Not as fat as I used to be!

Why do people think it's acceptable to abuse cyclists and fat people for anything. Riding along today working hard going uphill and a flatbed truck decides to drive past far too close shouting "go on you fat b@st@rd way hey!!!" Beeping their horn and laughing I already know I'm fat. I know I'm not the fastest going uphill. It's not telling me something I don't know. But when I have such shocking mental health it will destroy me. It will crush my motivation. Before I had th... [See more](#)

227 213 comments

Like Comment Share

So yesterday some ignorant 'white van man' decided to belittle me in front of my family while on my 6yr olds first 15mile bike ride..... He opened his window and shouted 'fat c*nt' at me as I cycled along.

Need to be on a motorway to be able to give her the necessary 1.5 meter clearance when overtaking.

The Idea

Fat can't. No. Fat can.

There's no shortcuts to banging ideas, no algorithm to making home runs and it definitely doesn't happen in a 'brainstorm'.

Get a room

Nope. In fact, the best ideas have always been created when the smartest people get in a room and are given time.

Fat Can't was no different... we had a room of writers, art directors, designers and general mischief makers, and then somebody said "*slap my ass and call me Geoffrey. CAN'T and CUNT are so similar. I have an idea!*"

Potent ideas

FAT C*N'T looks a lot like FAT CUNT. It was a risky idea, but more importantly it was an idea that seemed crazy because it took an accepted thought, and turned it on its head. That's where the potency is.

The client 'got' it immediately, and was fully on board from the start.



Media planning

We again used the smart planning strategy we'd used in *Time to Change Gear*. Our media agency, [JKO Collective](#), mapped phone data alongside the audience, geo-targeting this info and creating hotspots within which we could target our audience.

London Lites, our hero

But then we hit a sticky wicket. The major media owners refused to run it because they thought it was too 'edgy'. Ergh.

From a media planning point of view, it was a really difficult campaign to get out there. But JKO managed to convince one media owner to take a punt with us. Enter our heroes, London Lites.

Big kudos has to go to London Lites, a smaller media owner compared to the Goliaths. But they know what it takes to get noticed, how to be brave.

They ran it all over London in large-format digital boards, supported by aggressive levels of fly-posting... everywhere.



Agony and ecstasy

Activist

We agonised over the art direction, concentrating on making the FAT C*N'T look as though it had been painted on. It's rough and ready, not a typical typeface... almost giving a graffiti style.

Akin to being more activist and community-led, rather than a typical polished brand.

Landing in the right order

Our bold type ain't the only clever element either. Obviously, the C*N'T really draws you in:

"That says FAT CUNT! Oh no wait, it says FAT CAN'T".

Then we draw the eye down to CAN. And *"It's cyclewear for every body"*. Bosh.

It's almost like we've done this before. The ol' advertising 1,2,3.

The great Sir John Hegarty once said, *"a great idea is 80% idea and 80% execution"*. And this campaign fits that mould... it was a light bulb moment, followed by hours of graft, and craft.



Some of the LOVE

It was gargantuan

Fat Lad's community started sharing their experiences and abuse they'd endured.

There was a whole lot of unity now we'd called out the shouting bystanders.

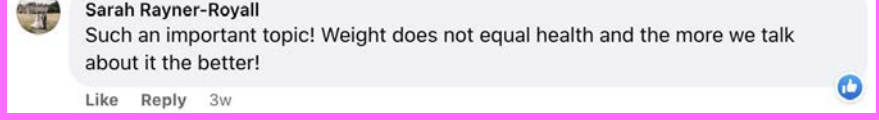
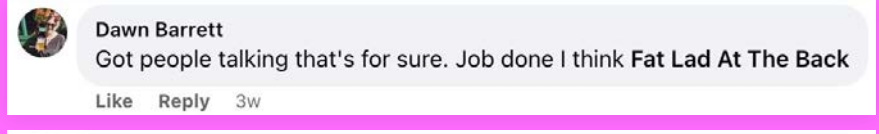
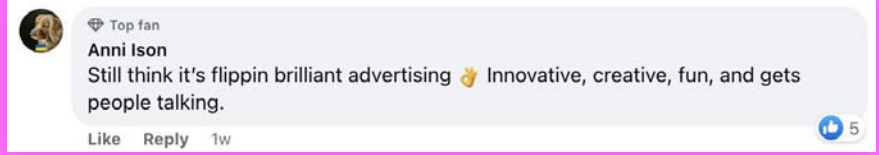
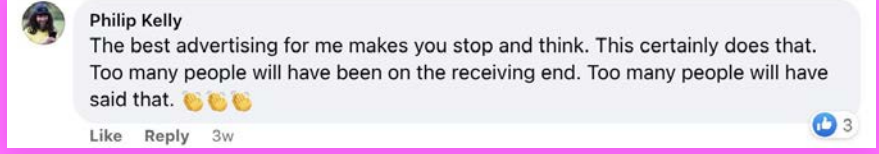
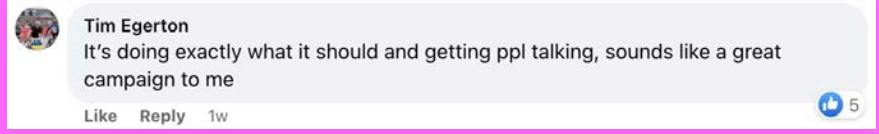
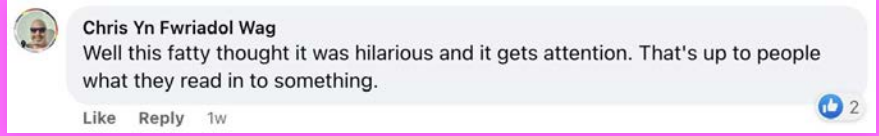
But it was divisive among the community as well. Some felt fat people shouldn't be using the term FAT CUNT, because they felt gave the public permission to call them that.

Others felt the insight was really strong, they really wanted to own the message. They wanted to own what people called them.

Marmite

But that's what a shocking campaign like this should be like... some loving it, some hating it.

Not everyone's going to agree, and if we didn't push buttons and get a reaction, well then, we'd have not succeeded.



Enter the ASA

The campaign ran in its allotted Summer burst. JKO had forecast the campaign would create 3 million impacts; of those 3 million there were a *huge* ELEVEN complaints from the public to the ASA (Advertising Standards Authority).

So it ain't that divisive, the C word. People aren't that offended. Barbara and Terry from Barnet were scandalously offended though.

Unofficial world record

They sent a [letter on fancy headed paper](#) saying the campaign was to be banned. Forever and ever. Boo.

We take our job very seriously. Our job is to get our clients noticed, to move the needle, to set the agenda. Fat Can't did that... and more.

If the ASA actually wanted a debate then we'd have happily obliged. What they've done is fatist and shows they're on the wrong side of history.

We shouldn't laugh, but it may get into the Guinness Book of World Records for the most amount of 'cunts' written in a Government sanctioned letter. SEVEN cunts in total!



We stand by it. Fat CAN.

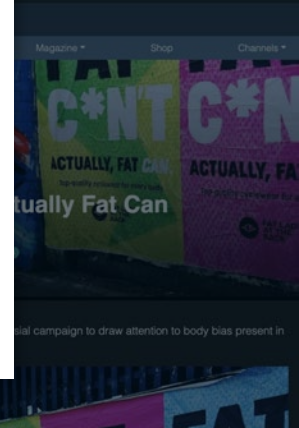
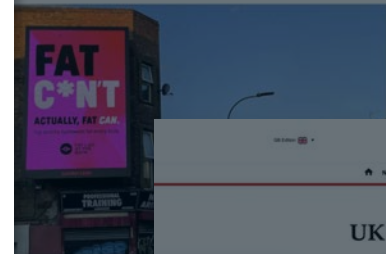
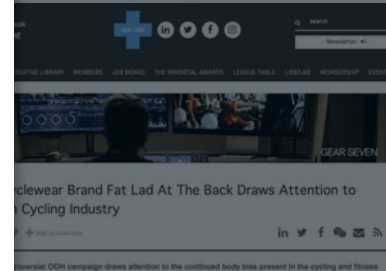
We started this to show Fat Lad stood with its audience. We wanted people to walk in Fat Lad's cycling shoes, feel their frustration and let the fat lads know somebody was WITH them.

We were united in calling out the trolls and giving the Fat Lads a VOICE.

And Boss Lady at Fat Lad, Lynn Bye, put it beautifully in an interview:

“It’s cheeky, we know that. It’s edgy. We know that too. But it’s really important that we change the rhetoric, and we start to change the way society assumes if you’re a larger person you can’t do loads of things and you’re lazy if you’re overweight. We just want to shock people into listening to the message; because it’s an important one.”

HARRO



Modern Marketing Brand Purpose

Almost rude 'Fat C*n't' campaign from plus-size cyclewear brand hits out at shamers

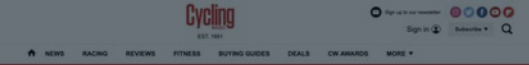
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By John Glenday | Reporter
July 16, 2022 | 3 MIN READ

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A plus-size cyclewear brand is challenging widespread fat shaming in cycling through the medium of a heavy-hitting out-of-home (OOH) campaign.

Fat Lad At The Back is speaking up for larger cyclists with 'Fat C*n't', a riff on the playground-level banter that all too frequently accompanies the sight of larger bodies in the cycling and fitness sphere.



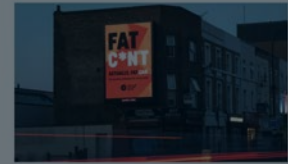
UK cycling brand's apparently explicit advert is proving highly divisive

Fat Lad At The Back's seemingly offensive billboard addresses body bias present within cycling and fitness industry

BY JOHN GLENDAY
PUBLISHED 3 HOURS AGO

A new advertising campaign for UK cycling clothing brand Fat Lad At The Back, which it says focuses attention on the way larger people on bikes are treated within society, has seen billboards and posters featuring what appears to be a highly offensive obscenity crop up around London.

The slogan used in the campaign is 'Fat Can't, actually, fat can!', but by replacing the second 'i' with an asterisk the ads - created by agency Mellor & Smith - read as 'Fat C*n't, actually fat can!', something that can be interpreted entirely differently.



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