UK Science Year

working to a pre-defined government brief
What is the BA?

• established 1831
• nationwide organisation with a regional & branch network
• communicating science in an open society
• broad programme of events
• open & inclusive membership
What does the BA do?

- the BA Festival of Science
- UK National Science Week
- media fellowships
- sciBArts
- science & society forums
- public consultations
- mass participation experiments
- events for professional science communicators
- Science & Public Affairs magazine
- Alpha Galileo press service
- young science writers awards
- award schemes for young people
- major hands on science events for younger children
- Visions workshops
UK Science Year

- UK Government initiative to boost science in schools following recent literacy & numeracy years

- involved three Government departments covering education, trade & industry (including science) & culture
UK Science Year

Objectives
• to improve the profile & perception of science
• to enhance science teaching & learning
• to involve communities in science
• to strengthen & demonstrate links between schools, higher education & industry

Audience
• 11 – 19 year olds and the adults that influence them
UK Science Year

- Managed by NESTA
- 2 key partners
  - Association for Science Education (ASE) – professional body for science teachers in the UK embodying formal science education
  - The BA – embodying informal science education
The BA Science Year programme

The objectives

• to define a programme meeting the objectives of Science Year
• to enhance the BA’s existing programme
• to devise some new & innovative activities
• to achieve ‘added value’ & sustainability
the BA Science Year programme

The audience

• teenagers (13 – 19 year olds)
• teenagers of tomorrow (8 – 12 year olds)
• adults who influence these young people
the BA Science Year programme

The content (1)

• enhancing UK National Science Week with new schools’ materials
• creating a mass participation experiment - LaughLab
• awarding grants to schools to take part in Science Year
• BAckchat student exchange between teenagers & world class scientists at the BA Festival of Science
the BA Science Year programme

The content (2)

• building the BA science club network & working with ECSITE UK on sciZmic
• creating a major hands on science event - *Science Discovery Day*
• creating *Footprints* – a touring drama workshop
Science clubs

The audience
• 8 – 13 year olds
• teachers

The aim
• to increase the number of science clubs in the BA’s network
Science clubs

What we did (1)

- rolling programme of workshops for teachers, teacher trainees & trainers, local science advisers & others
- built on Government initiatives to enhance the experience of socially excluded young people & of the gifted & talented
- worked with ECSITE UK to develop a new model of science clubs operating from science centres
Science clubs

What we did (2)

• increased the number of clubs by 20%
• provided ways of running enrichment activities to meet the needs of all children
Science clubs

Sustainability

• improved infrastructures to support the programme – new newsletter, sciZmic integration etc
• heightened profile for enrichment activities generally
• teacher training institutions now replicating through annual sessions on enrichment activities
Science Discovery Day

The audience
• 11 – 19 year olds
• teachers

The aim
• to devise a major & memorable hands on science event with relevant content for this audience
Science Discovery Day

What we did

• held a day of hands on science at London’s Royal Albert Hall
• over 3 000 teenagers & their teachers came
• and the Minister for Schools
• to take part in over 100 workshops, talks, discussions
• led by (Nobel) scientists, science educators & others
Science Discovery Day

Sustainability

• new approaches tried with this age group that can be used again

• built upon BA’s experience with 8 – 12 year olds & showed this approach is viable with older children

• it is repeatable (subject to funding)

• & the BA is looking at ‘franchising’ the concept for use all over the UK
Footprints

The audience
• 11 – 14 year olds
• teachers

The aim
• using drama, to create a discussion forum about the future of genetics
Footprints

What we did

• commissioned a devised drama from an experimental stage director
• chose genetics for its topicality, for the social implications & the potential for controversy
• produced curriculum support materials
• took the drama into schools (over 50 performances)
• orchestrated guided discussion after the performances
Footprints

Sustainability

• further performance tours of the drama are planned in UK schools
• curriculum support materials continue to be distributed
• interest from abroad – Malaysia & Germany – bid to British Council to fund
Lessons learnt (1)

• feedback from the audiences (both the young people & the teachers) were positive in each instance (*Footprints* was commended as particularly innovative)

• Science Year provided much needed resources that enabled the BA to do some R&D

• the activities that were built round existing BA programmes will be more sustainable by influencing future activity
Lessons learnt (2)

• one-off activity served a useful purpose but was some of it was less sustainable without further funding
• the BA was able to respond quickly to an extremely tight timescale
• we could do it even better the next time!