DEFINITIVE EXPERTISE

FTI CONSULTING™

in Media Relations

GLOBAL FREEDOM NETWORK

When the Walk Free Foundation wanted to arrange a high impact worldwide media launch for its new Global Freedom Network initiative, they turned to FTI Consulting's Strategic Communications experts.

The Walk Free Foundation's mission is deceptively simple: to end modern slavery across the world. To help achieve this the Foundation brought together for the very first time the leaders of the Anglican, Catholic and Sunni Muslim traditions to launch a new initiative – the Global Freedom Network (GFN).

With such high-profile founding signatories as Pope Francis, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and Ahmed El-Tayeb, Grand Imam of al-Azhar and the highest authority in the Sunni Islamic tradition, the Walk Free Foundation were keen to achieve maximum possible global exposure and media coverage for the launch of GFN in spring 2014.

It soon became clear that the task would not be simple. Firstly, the team had only four weeks from the time of appointment to the launch, and with the client based in Australia the time pressures were a clear obstacle. Secondly, we had the difficult task of aligning the coalition of faith leaders and diplomatically negotiating the theological differences between them which, whilst to the outsider may seem small, were of the upmost importance to the founding partners. Lastly, while this particular faith-based initiative was the first of its kind, there are many other charities campaigning against slavery, and we did not want the media to dismiss the GFN as a 'me-too' project or, worse, tokenism.

Our communications team therefore took the strategic decision to target a very specific and select list of global media outlets, journalists and opinion leaders in order to ensure GFN's message reached the most important and influential audiences in each region. The message was clear: that the support of these faith leaders made this initiative a unique and powerful tool in the fight against slavery.

From our base in Brussels we developed the story, devised the launch media strategy and managed the delicate combination of diplomacy and coalition-building. An on-the-ground team was embedded in the Vatican for the launch event, and FTI Consulting's global network of offices allowed the creation of regional hubs to communicate the story across the world.

The launch itself was highly complicated. Our team produced a range of launch documents and press packs, including a press release, a statement from Walk Free Foundation's Founder Andrew Forrest, extensive FAQs, key biographies and media backgrounders, all of which had to be translated into thirteen languages. An op-ed article which we sold into the international media had to take into account the different views of our four distinct religious partners. We also carefully scripted and produced a B-roll for global broadcast outlets.

> *We would like to deeply express our appreciation for giving us exactly what we wanted: a global launch that reached the darkest corners and the brightest lights. We all know how hard you as the core team have worked. It has been a phenomenal effort and we are delighted with the outcome.*
>
> — Andrew Forrest, Founder, Walk Free Foundation

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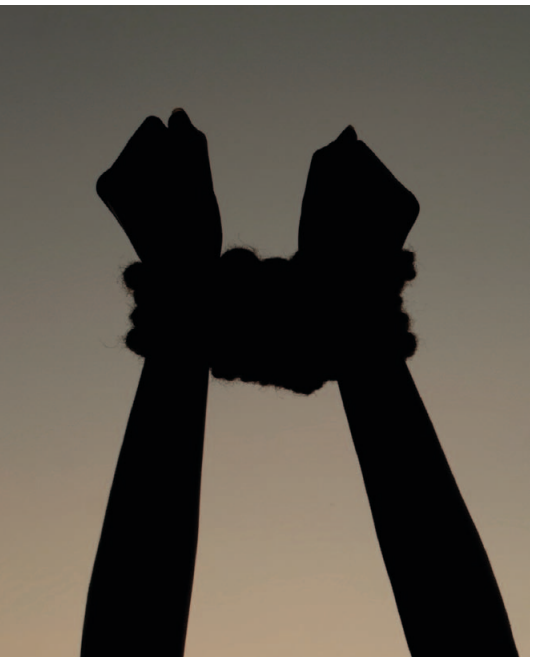
In Rome itself, which became the centrepiece of the story, we managed the press conference logistics, media attendance and an extensive interview roster in the Vatican. This included live TV broadcast interviews before and after the launch press conference, which itself was live-streamed to media across the world.

Simultaneously, our team in Brussels led FTI Consulting's network of global hubs in reaching out to our select target media to promote the launch story, convert further interview opportunities and ensure a maximum of media uptake.

Ultimately, the planning paid off, as the launch of GFN achieved mass global coverage, spanning all continents and covering a diverse range of markets. The highlight was undoubtedly a prime-time in-depth interview with three GFN spokespeople on CNN's Amanpour show. In addition to this we also secured over 500 news reports worldwide, including on BBC, NPR, ABC Australia, ABC News, Reuters and many other major outlets.



OUTCOME

THE MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE LAUNCH OF THE GLOBAL FREEDOM NETWORK WAS UNIVERSALLY POSITIVE AND THE FOUNDER WAS DELIGHTED WITH THE ATTENTION IT RECEIVED ACROSS THE WORLD.

We were also asked to prepare a media coverage report focused particularly on coverage in the Italian and Spanish media for His Holiness Pope Francis. His representative to the GFN board relayed the Pope's feedback, which was *"It is amazing the amount & quality of rapports ['clippings'] that you have been able to collect."*

INVESTIGATE EVALUATE COMMUNICATE

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CRITICAL THINKING
AT THE CRITICAL TIME™

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