

# USING EFFECTIVE STORYTELLING IN A MARKETING CAMPAIGN ON A TIGHT BUDGET



## Challenge

Can we create a campaign with the small marketing budget of a local authority that competes with the bigger budgets of private agencies?

How do we appeal to the hearts of local people who have the capacity to foster a child, at a time of great demand?

## Outcome

A heartwarming animation focusing on the story of a young boy and his hero - his foster carer.

Versions optimised for a range of viewing scenarios such as mobile-viewing and showcasing at networking events, to maximise the usage they could get from investing in this campaign.

*Foster for Salford* is a local authority organisation, part of *Salford City Council*. There is a very real need for more foster carers and adoptive parents in the area, and their mission is reaching the people who can help. Over the course of month, I worked with them to produce this animation from start to finish, with emotional messaging and a clear call to action.

## Project Strategy

This animation was going to take a month to produce, and there wasn't much room to deviate from the timescale. So from the outset we worked together closely, to ensure the project stayed on track and that, by the time we got round to the time-consuming part of animating the final video, they knew what they were getting and were totally happy, and we wouldn't need to go back to make drastic changes. This means we stayed on schedule, and on budget.

How did I do this? I made them the director of their movie!

I took them through a whole week of pre-production, during which they were able to make all the creative decisions ahead of time. We refined the script together, I put together styleframes so they could get a feel for how the final animation will look and curate what they liked and didn't like. Then I went one step further and brought on a storyboard artist to help produce a full animatic (moving storyboard) of the whole video, with the voiceover, just like a Pixar movie would!

By the end of this pre-production week, the team at *Foster for Salford* were able to spot and tease out the editorial problems that arose, before we were too far down the line, and we had a clear roadmap for the animation to come.

## Process

“Andy, how do we make this cute but emotional at the same time?”, they asked me.

“We use character design and a simple, human story to melt the hearts of your audience”, I answered.



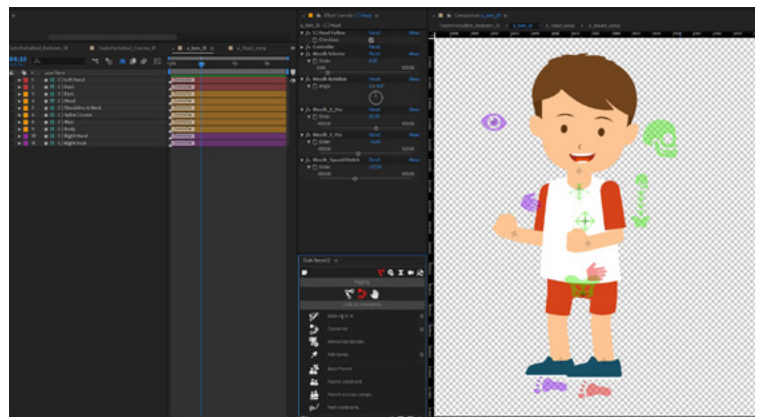
These styleframes previsualised the video before the project moved ahead. Showing these to the client early on made sure I knew exactly what was in their imagination, and jump-started the creative process.



Next up we tackled the story and how it would piece together. From this rough animatic ([watch here](#)), the client was able to see exactly how the video would play out, very early on in the process. We also recorded the final voiceover at this stage too, so the timing could be locked down for the animation to come. This went further in allowing us to crunch down the project's timescale and keep to their budget.



Parallel to the storyboard artist drawing these frames, I was also illustrating and rigging the main character ready for animating. I rigged the character using *After Effects* and *Duik*, being sure to give the character the wide range of expressions and movement the story required. This process is incredibly technical and time consuming. I keep this side of things behind-the-scenes, so the client can focus purely on the creative choices whilst I take care of making the magic happen.



Since we'd taken the time to plan and prepare the video, once it came round to animating it was hands-free for the team at *Foster for Salford*. They had directed it all up to this point, so they could sit back with confidence knowing it was in safe hands. I spent two weeks crafting every moment of the animation and leaving no detail untouched. To strengthen their visual identity as an organisation, I also sprinkled their brand colours throughout the scene and character designs.

Their reaction when I sent them the finished animation? Here it is:

**“WOWWW! I LOVE IT! Andy it is absolutely fantastic. Thank you so so much. There is absolutely nothing I would change, I think it's brilliant. I love the cinema scene, I love it all!”**

Frames from the finished animation ([watch it here](#))



### From the Client

We commissioned Andy to undertake a significant piece of work. Firstly the communication is always a joy and we were kept informed at every step of the way. It's clear he is an absolute expert. He listened to our needs and was able to guide us through the entire process making it as easy as possible for us. It's pretty obvious that he is highly experienced in his field.

The quality of the work he has produced is immaculate! It is so much better than we had ever hoped for and we can not recommend him highly enough.

**Alec Turton**

Measuring the success of a video like this is tricky, since they usually form part of a bigger or longer marketing campaign, and it's the campaign as a whole that you would gather the metrics from. That is why my dialogue with *Foster for Salford* is ongoing, as we monitor the response to this story and explore what we can do next to reinforce it.

For me though, as a graphic designer and animator, my primary goal is to bring my client's story to life, in a way that maximises engagement with their audience. This animation appeals to the extraordinarily kind hearts of prospective foster carers with pure cute-factor, turning their simple mission into a human appeal.