

# A FETCHING TAIL OF FRIENDSHIP

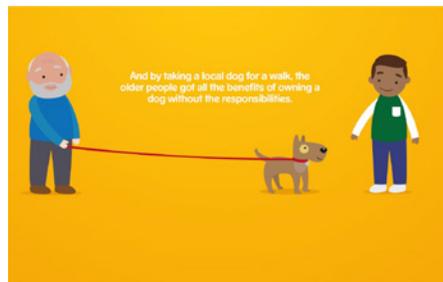
Pedigree used direct mail to reach isolated seniors and match them with local dogs, giving everyone a reason to step outside the door.

Loneliness can hit at any stage of life, but the older we are, the greater the likelihood of social isolation. Solitude has been linked to alcohol and drug abuse, eating disorders and depression. Sadly, a lack of social connections carries the same risk for early death as smoking 15 cigarettes a day. According to an article in the *Globe and Mail*, almost 25 per cent of Canadians and 40 per cent of Americans describe themselves as lonely.

Pedigree knows that dogs are conversations waiting to happen – and here's a brand that believes our four-legged friends can make a difference. How about helping elderly people meet new friends by matching them with local dogs?

Following weeks of recruitment through direct mail, print and OOH, Dog Dates launched in the English town of Melton Mowbray – otherwise famous for its pork pies. The initiative paired isolated people with dog owners, so they could walk together. Recording an average of 4,000 steps each time they walked, the initiative got seniors outside and increased their activity levels.

The successful pilot earned media across multiple channels, including major TV. The campaign reached 19 million people, generating 23 million impressions. Every participant was interested in attending further Dog Dates – with four in 10 making plans to meet again. Fifty-seven per cent said they met so many new people they lost count. This heartwarming idea was so successful that Mars Petcare UK rolled it out across the entire country. Tails were wagging!



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