

# Finland's Most Curious Class

From school marketing to meaningful  
audience engagement

*Heureka, the Finnish Science Centre*

ICOM COMMS Awards

Best Audience Engagement Initiative



## THE CHALLENGE

### Traditional marketing

School marketing was traditionally focused on encouraging schools to visit Heureka.

### The question:

*Could marketing itself become an opportunity for learning, participation and engagement?*

## THE SHIFT

### FROM PROMOTING A VISIT → TO CREATING PARTICIPATION

Instead of telling students what to learn, Heureka asked:

*What would you like to know?*

School classes were invited to submit up to three science-related questions they genuinely wanted answered.

## THE PARTICIPATION

### 237 classes • 711 questions

Students worked together, questioned the familiar, searched for information and explored ideas.

The competition became a cross-curricular learning experience, engaging students and teachers – and in many cases their families.

## THE AUDIENCE BECAME THE CONTENT

### Students asked → Heureka listened → Experts responded → Curiosity was shared

The students' questions became expert videos and other content for Heureka's website and social media.

**The audience was no longer simply the target of communication.**

**The audience helped shape the communication.**

## THE LONG-TERM IMPACT

### From campaign → to repeatable platform

The concept was designed to be simple, scalable and easy to repeat.

- January 2025: competition launched
- May 2025: winning classes visited Heureka
- 2026: competition relaunched with minor adjustments
- Heureka supporters could sponsor winning classes' visits, creating a new way to engage partners

**91.7% of survey respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the competition.**

## THE BIG IDEA

### Give audiences something to do, not just something to see.

Finland's Most Curious Class showed that school marketing can be more than promotion. It can be participation, education, content creation and relationship-building at the same time.

The result was not simply more engagement with Heureka – it was a way of taking science-centre thinking beyond the walls of the science centre and into classrooms across Finland.

*More about the competition: [www.heureka.fi/finlands-most-curious-class](http://www.heureka.fi/finlands-most-curious-class)*



# Finland's Most Curious Class

## Turning school marketing into meaningful audience engagement

**Category:** Best Audience Engagement Initiative

**Organisation:** Heureka, the Finnish Science Centre

**Project type:** Nationwide school engagement and marketing campaign

### 1. THE CHALLENGE

How can a science centre reach new school audiences in a way that creates genuine value for teachers and students rather than simply encouraging them to visit?

For Heureka, school marketing had traditionally been closely connected to promoting school visits. With **Finland's Most Curious Class -competition**, we wanted to explore a different approach: could marketing itself become an opportunity for learning, participation and engagement?

The objectives were to increase Heureka's visibility nationwide, reach new school audiences and create content that teachers could use in their teaching. We also wanted to keep Heureka in teachers' minds even when a school trip was not immediately relevant.

At the heart of the initiative was a simple question:

**What if we started with the questions students have – rather than the answers we can give them?**

### 2. THE IDEA

Heureka launched **Finland's Most Curious Class in January 2025** as a nationwide competition for school classes. The competition had separate categories for **primary and lower secondary schools**, ensuring that the challenge was relevant to different age groups.

The prize was designed to be an experience rather than an object: the winning class in each category received a **trip to Heureka**, including transportation for the entire class. The prize trips took place in **May 2025**, bringing the competition full circle – from curiosity in the classroom to hands-on exploration at the science centre.

The concept was deliberately designed to be **simple, scalable and easy to repeat**. This allowed Heureka to build a campaign model that could be reused rather than creating a completely new initiative from scratch each year.

The competition also created a new opportunity to **engage Heureka's supporters and partners**. The prize structure made it possible for supporters to sponsor the Heureka trips for the winning classes, connecting audience engagement with partnership opportunities and giving sponsors a meaningful role in enabling children to experience science.

The concept proved its potential for long-term use: with minor adjustments, **the competition was run again in early 2026**.

The idea in **Finland's Most Curious Class -competition** was inviting school classes to come up with up to three science-related questions they would like to have answered.

The aim was deliberately not to find the most difficult or technically impressive questions. Instead, the competition celebrated:

- **curiosity**
- **creativity**
- **collaboration**
- **insight**
- **thinking outside the box**

Students were encouraged to look at familiar things from new perspectives and challenge established ways of thinking.

The simplicity of the challenge was central to the concept:

**"Work together to come up with a maximum of three science-related questions you would like to have answered."**

There was no need for the teacher to know the answers. The starting point was simply to ask: **What do we want to know?**



### 3. FROM MARKETING CAMPAIGN TO LEARNING EXPERIENCE

The concept quickly proved to have value beyond the competition itself.

In many schools, the challenge developed into a **cross-curricular learning project**. Classes used subjects including environmental studies, Finnish language and literature, mathematics, history and visual arts as they developed their questions.

Students worked together, searched for information, discussed ideas and justified their thinking. In many cases, the process also engaged students' families.

This was an important shift in Heureka's approach to school marketing.

Instead of telling schools what Heureka wanted them to know, **we gave schools something they could make their own**.

Instead of marketing a visit, we offered an experience.

And instead of positioning students as recipients of communication, we invited them to become **active participants and creators**.

### 4. THE AUDIENCE BECAME THE CONTENT

One of the most valuable outcomes was that the campaign did not end when the competition ended.

The questions submitted by students became a source of new content for Heureka. Selected questions were developed into expert videos and other content for Heureka's website and social media channels.

This created a two-way relationship:

**Students asked → Heureka listened → experts responded → the answers were shared with a wider audience.**

Children's curiosity therefore became part of Heureka's communication and made the organisation's expertise visible in a new way.

The audience was not simply the target of the campaign.

**The audience helped shape the campaign's content.**

### 5. RESULTS

**The response exceeded expectations.**

**237**

school classes participated from across Finland

**711**

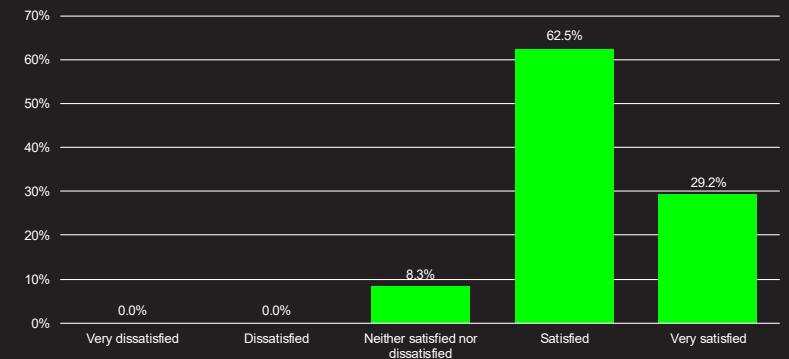
science-related questions were submitted

**91.7%**

of respondents to the participant survey were satisfied or very satisfied with the competition. (tämän jälkeen kaaviokuva osallistujien tyytyväisyydestä)



#### How did we do it?



The questions covered a wide range of topics, including space, black holes and dinosaurs. Their diversity demonstrated the breadth of children's curiosity and provided Heureka with a rich source of authentic questions from its target audience.

**" How do we know about the layers inside the Sun, Earth and all the other planets? We can't go near the Sun, we've only drilled 15 kilometres into the Earth, and no one has visited the other planets. "**

Winner of the primary schools, 6th grade from Mäkirinne school, Haapavesi



## 6. WHY IT MATTERED TO HEUREKA

For Heureka, the most important result was not simply the number of participating classes.

The project demonstrated a new way of thinking about **school marketing and audience engagement**.

A campaign can simultaneously:

- reach new audiences,
- strengthen relationships with teachers,
- provide genuine educational value,
- activate an entire class,
- generate new content,
- and communicate the organisation's core values.

Finland's Most Curious Class showed that marketing does not have to be separate from a science centre's educational mission.

**It can be an expression of that mission.**

The competition brought a distinctly science-centre approach into schools: starting with questions, encouraging exploration, valuing uncertainty and making room for different ways of thinking.

In this sense, Heureka did not only invite schools to come to the science centre.

**The science centre went to the schools.**

**The repeatability of the concept was an important part of its strategic value.**

Rather than designing a one-off campaign, Heureka created a format that could be refined, repeated and developed over time. The second edition in early 2026 demonstrated that the concept had become a sustainable tool for engaging schools and teachers – while also creating opportunities to involve Heureka's supporters in a tangible and meaningful way.

## 7. WHAT WE LEARNED

The project demonstrated that successful audience engagement does not necessarily require a complex concept.

A simple invitation – **"What would you like to know?"** – can become a powerful tool when it gives audiences genuine ownership.

For Heureka, three lessons stand out:

### 1. Give audiences something to do, not just something to see.

Participation becomes meaningful when people can contribute their own ideas and perspectives.

### 2. Create value before asking for anything in return.

Instead of asking schools to visit Heureka, we first offered teachers and students an activity they could use themselves.

### 3. Let the audience shape the communication.

The students' questions became content, giving Heureka an authentic way to communicate with and about its audience.

## 8. THE BIG IDEA

**Finland's Most Curious Class** started as an experiment in school marketing. It became something more.

It was a marketing concept, a pedagogical project and a new way of sharing the joy of discovery.

Most importantly, it showed that **audience engagement can go beyond attracting people to a cultural institution. It can bring the institution's values, expertise and ways of thinking into people's everyday environments.**

Finland's Most Curious Class was designed not just as a competition, but as a repeatable platform for engaging schools, generating authentic content, strengthening relationships with teachers and creating new opportunities for supporters to participate.

For Heureka, that meant taking curiosity beyond the walls of the science centre and into classrooms across Finland.

**Read more about the competition and curiosity:**

**[www.heureka.fi/finlands-most-curious-class](http://www.heureka.fi/finlands-most-curious-class)**