CONTAGIOUS

GRAND PRIX INSIGHTS

Strategy interviews with the teams behind some of the most celebrated campaigns from the 2022 Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity.

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INNOVATION GRAND PRIX

One House to Save Many / Suncorp

How an insurer designed a weather-proof house to win attention and reduce customer claims.

Extreme weather destroys or damages hundreds of thousands of Australian homes every year. Climate change is only exacerbating the problem, leaving entire communities in northern Queensland uninsurable. And according to Suncorp, 97% of disaster funding is spent on repairing and rebuilding, while only 3% is spent on prevention.

To address this issue, Suncorp partnered with Leo Burnett Australia, Sydney, The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), James Cook University and Room 11 Architects, to design a home that is resilient to extreme weather.

The integrated One House to Save Many campaign was launched nationally in April 2021 with a 60-second TV ad introducing One House, followed by product ads for Suncorp insurance. Outdoor and social placements promoted Suncorp's insurance products and reminded people to prepare for storm season.

Suncorp also created a 23-minute documentary that told the story of One House, which aired on Channel Nine, and the concept was presented to government institutions and building companies. Led by Suncorp, the Insurance Council of Australia has since launched Project Resilience, which aims to embed resilience into the National Construction Code by 2025.

Several weeks after launch, the Federal Government announced a $600m resilience fund for new disaster preparation and mitigation programmes. The campaign reached 99% of the target audience through paid and earned media and was covered across every major Australian news network, resulting in more than 20 million impressions.

We sat down with Leo Burnett Australia strategy director **Abigail**

Dubi-Rhodin and art director **Marijke Spain** to learn more about the insight behind the One House to Save Many, and how it ties back to Suncorp's brand platform. They said:

/ Insurance is expensive and One House helps Suncorp show customers the value they get from a Suncorp policy

/ One House to Save Many is designed to shift the focus from reaction and response to preparation and prevention

/ In a low-interest category, ideas that transcend advertising and make real impact are essential to catch the attention of customers

Tell us about the brand and where it sits in the competitive set in Australia.

Abigail Dubin-Rhodin: Suncorp Insurance is a portfolio brand within Suncorp Group, one of the two largest insurance groups in Australia alongside competitor IAG. As a retail insurer, it's one of the largest, if not the largest insurance brand in Queensland, which is the specific market that most of its advertising plays in. And the areas that are most impacted by natural disasters would be northern and regional Queensland. That's where Suncorp has really significant exposure; Suncorp makes up more than a third of all the premiums in northern Queensland, and no other company has more than 15% of the market.

So unsurprisingly, Suncorp has way higher exposure whenever a natural disaster occurs. So that's upwards of $150m, every time a cyclone happens, or half a billion dollars every time a bushfire happens. So there's probably no brand that could have this conversation and create One House with the same level of credibility as Suncorp. A lot of other brands have either removed themselves from the market, or they don't advertise as much so that they're not as visible, or they won't allow the same percentage of customers to be in those areas, because it's quite expensive and high risk.

Marijke Spain: They're well loved up there as well. Queenslanders love them.

Dubin-Rhodin: Yeah, back in 2011 there were these massive floods in Brisbane, and Suncorp was the first insurance company to say that any flooding would count as flooding. Normally, there are quite significant restrictions on exactly what counts as flooding. But there was just such significant flooding and such large impact that Suncorp came out and said 'A flood is a flood.' And that had a pretty significant amount of goodwill for the brand for about 10 years after. When we got this brief, it was when the impact of the message of 'We automatically cover all floods' was beginning to become more saturated and was less of a potent message on the market.

What's Suncorp's North Star?

Dubin-Rhodin: Suncorp shows up very early, right after organisations like the Queensland SES [State Emergency Service] – they're there with their assessors, they're making sure that people can get cash on hand because they also have a bank side of their business. So Suncorp is at its best, both from a brand perspective, and from a human impact perspective, at times when there have been these really big storms. And unfortunately, those types of storms hit really frequently in Queensland. I think there have been 80 extreme weather events in the last decade here.

Spain: From a creative standpoint, all that brand perception fed into the brand platform that we've created for them, which is 'That's the Suncorp spirit'. Everything they do is done with this spirit of Suncorp and that much-loved people-first attitude – everything we do for them creatively has always got this tonality to it.

Dubin-Rhodin: And there's no lack of stories in that space, it's a very rich area for them.

And what would you say is Suncorp's biggest business challenge right now?

Dubin-Rhodin: Price competitiveness and perceptions of value. That is what informs the buyer's decision to purchase. Insurance is exceptionally expensive in Queensland. In parts of north Queensland, home insurance coverage is nearly double the cost of the the rest of Australia. Also, in Queensland and particularly northern Queensland, in the last 10 years, average home insurance premiums have increased upwards of 67%, versus 16% for the rest of Australia. So it's not just that the insurance is expensive to begin with, it's that every single time one of these events happens, the prices go up and up and up, in order to help with the recovery and navigate the fact that those areas are now higher risk than they were before.

That's quite an issue for Suncorp because there are more budget challengers on the market so there's an opportunity for people to get a lower price. Cutting prices is not really possible for Suncorp because it's a really comprehensive product. At the time that One House came out, for example, they already had product benefits such as the cyclone resilience benefit, which offers discounts on cyclone resilience improvements on people's houses and high risk areas.

And as part of the One House project, we also developed a product called Build it Back better, so if anyone's home is impacted significantly by an event then we build it back to the standards

that have been identified in One House. These really great products are built into Suncorp's insurance offering that really work to help make people more resilient, but all of that comes at a cost. And when you're staring down the barrel of a huge insurance bill versus maybe a budget insurer saying, we'll give it to you for way less, that can be really tempting, even if then when an event happens, you realise that you're not actually covered for anything.

Spain: A thread throughout this whole thing is that preparation for these events is going to save both consumers' money as well as Suncorp's. So it's within their interest to start focusing on that, which feeds into the brief. Creatively, we weren't briefed on this idea specifically, it was a campaign for storm season, which is an annual campaign they go out with to prepare Queensland for storms.

Dubin-Rhodin: Yeah, we created way more work for ourselves in how we answered the brief than what was originally asked of us. Storm season is an annual event that happens from about October to February, when there's a higher propensity specifically for cyclones and flooding in Queensland. Everyone's really familiar with it, it's a really standard thing for insurers to speak to, so it's an annual campaign moment for Suncorp as well as its key competitors. And when you have something that's an annual campaign

moment, people get really desensitised to it. And that had led to an environment where of the claims that Suncorp was receiving after a natural disaster, about 90% could have been prevented or mitigated had resilience measures been taken.

Dubin-Rhodin: And also, it didn't matter if people had been exposed to an event in the past – there's data that shows that if you've had experience with a cyclone, because you lived through it, you're likely to [shrug it off] and have a bit of hindsight bias, and you see people not responding with more than minimum action. And that's a problem because storms are getting a lot stronger and a lot more frequent.

In Queensland, there have been six Category Five cyclones in the last 20 years and before that there had been four in the 100 years before that. So what we were being asked to do is navigate and disrupt this desensitisation. Because people who weren't necessarily paying attention to it would go for who has the best price, or stay with who they were with – there's not a ton of switching in insurance. We needed to get people to make an active choice and decision about insurance, using storm season as this moment in the calendar.

Spain: That boiled down into the insight, which Abby wrote from a strategic position into our creative brief, which was that Queenslanders have this 'She'll be right' attitude, which is a very Aussie way of saying it'll work out and we'll survive. But these events are getting more frequent, they are getting worse, and you probably won't be 'right' unless you do something about it.

With such an ambitious project, did the client take any convincing?

Spain: Not really, because they loved it from the start, they saw the value in it. But they were aware that something that big needed a much longer lead time to get off the ground. So the idea evolved and grew a lot from how we initially presented it. But most of the back and forth was deciding how to do it and how to achieve it for the right money, not if we'd do it.

How did you approach the challenge of getting people to shift their mindset from claims to prevention and protection?

Dubin-Rhodin: It's probably not a job done with a single campaign and we've continued to carry that torch. But we set ourselves the goal of making resilience, rather than price, the most valuable thing in the minds of people when they're making decisions about insurance. That's been a North Star when we develop things. And one of the ways that we we did that is through the media

planning: we had a big documentary launch on A Current Affair, which is a large human interest storytelling platform in Australia. And then we focused a lot of our sort of storytelling creative into those areas of Queensland where there's significant impact, and you can see that from the results – there's been a shift in belief around the importance of resilience. We didn't want to scare them. Lots of storm season campaigns try to scare people. We wanted people to be able to retain the 'She'll be right' attitude, but have it actually make sense.

It was about saying, there is a gap between what you have in your house today and what One House was able to create. These houses that you live in, in Queensland, the majority of them are not set up for the state of the climate today. This is what it actually takes. A house that has been designed by the national science agency, a university and insurance company and an architect specifically meet all of these challenges. It's not that [customers] are necessarily doing anything wrong. It's that fundamentally houses have not been made in this way, but there are actions that you can take. That was really important, because there are lots of campaigns that are like, hey, it's storm season, clean your gutters out and trim your trees. And that does a job, but fundamentally, it's not going to do anything to your insurance premiums.

Spain: It was a really important part of the way the creative idea evolved. Originally, we were quite focused on reminding people about how much damage could happen to your home. But the reality is, people already know that. We're living and breathing this every day. So it wasn't about reigniting fear in people, because of all the trauma that we've been through with disasters in recent years. It was about being optimistic and having hope and showing that we can build resilience and prepare ourselves.

The stat which is really compelling is that 3% of money is spent on preparation, and 97% is being spent on recovery and cleaning up – we need to flip that and spend it up front so that we don't have to go through all this heartbreak every time. Because it was such a long lead time, we had to navigate even the Black Summer bushfires; originally, we didn't include fire in how One House was built, it was cyclones and floods-focused. But a year later, we needed it to be resilient to bushfires as well. It was a no brainer. Covid-19 had its own production and executional challenges – there were so many twists and turns throughout the journey.

Tell us about the choice to do a documentary.

Dubin-Rhodin: A key part of this is having stories of real people who are impacted. So there are obviously a lot of interviews with people in the organisations that helped develop this idea, but really, the centre of the documentary is these families who had this attitude of 'She'll be right' and how storms don't really care about your attitude to them, they'll impact anything in their path. We were talking to people who lived through an event a decade ago, who still have this really visceral, immediate response to what happened – they didn't just lose their house, they lost their home, they lost irreplaceable memories in the form of photos and memories of being a family in that house. A documentary was the best environment or medium to be able to do justice to those stories.

Spain: We were conscious that we had an entire campaign ecosystem to work with – the documentary wasn't necessarily going to be the forefront of that really hard-hitting message about changing people's attitudes. But it was such a big story and a long story to tell, you couldn't do that in a 60-second ad. We had all this content from interviewing amazing experts at CSIRO, facilities in cyclone testing at James Cook University and then the architects. So, we needed a forum to tell that whole story and even though it's probably not the world's most high-paced and exciting documentary, it's a really interesting journey to watch, end to end. And then we had the shorter edits for TV, which are a little bit more compelling and emotional, featuring the shoot of the house going under all the testing.

How did you approach the balance of how prominent the brand was in the documentary?

Spain: That was a big discussion. We really wanted to make sure that it didn't feel like an ad because it's not. And as much as Suncorp were really integral, they were part of a team. Suncorp bring really valuable insights about the industry and years of learnings and data, equally CSIRO and James Cook University and the architects at Room 11 and our production partners, all brought their expertise – it was just about bringing all of those minds together.

What's next for One House to Save Many?

Spain: Queensland was the target for the brand, but in my opinion, it was bigger than that – it was Australia, and it was the world. We've just actually launched year two of the campaign, which is called Resilience Road. Essentially, we've taken the data and the insights from One House and that whole design process and applied it to a real street, five houses in a row that we found in Rockhampton [a city in central Queensland]. It's so amazing to have found a street of people willing to

participate and go through an interview and assessment process of their homes. Cyclones are getting further south, bushfires are getting further north, and they're in a really vulnerable position. So we made resilient changes to their homes, whether it be gutter guards, strengthening doors or lifting power points for floods. It's effectively democratising this idea of resilience.

What was your greatest learning from the campaign?

Spain: There were a lot. It was a reminder of the power of collaboration – you really couldn't do anything like this without everyone in their field of expertise. And also that advertising has the power to change the way we live. We can live in this box sometimes of the advertising world, but this is truly an idea that everyone outside of advertising is realising the value of. So that's empowering – we're getting some awards that are not advertising-related, too.

It's great to see an idea transcend advertising and have real-world impact, particularly in a low-interest category like insurance.

Dubin-Rhodin: Yeah, something like only 2% of people are ever in the market for insurance at a time and 70% of people just renew without even thinking about it. So if you want to get people to change their minds and move to another brand specifically because they stand for making people more resilient, you you need to do something quite big. Especially in a place like Queensland, where the attitude that everything will come up sunshine is pretty deeply ingrained. So we just wanted to show what it's actually going to take. That's the power of One House – you can see with your own eyes exactly what it's going to take in order for your house to be resilient to a massive burning bushfire, a cyclone, a flood. We wanted people to walk away with this idea that, 'I don't live in one house right now, because no one does, but if I go with Suncorp, then I'll have access to the things that I need to be resilient for the next thing that's coming.'

Spain: And you can't put a price on it, anyone would be willing to pay for that preparation. It's such an amazing light to shine on Suncorp. Insurers get hated on for making us pay so much money, but this builds meaning into that value.

Dubin-Rhodin: Exactly, it goes back to shifting that value equation. Insurance costs a lot of money, especially in Queensland, and it feels like a slap in the face when you don't know what you're getting for it or when there's a lot of exceptions to the things that you're covered for. But when you have a brand like Suncorp, that is exceptionally comprehensive, that's consistently innovating to find and develop new products, like Build it Back better, or the cyclone resilience benefit, you know you're getting value for money. I don't know that it takes all the sting off of insurance being expensive, but at least you know that you're going to be protected when something happens. And that's definitely not something that can be said for the entire category.

Snippe

It's frustrating seeing only a fragment of the whole picture, isn't it? This report is just a teeny tiny portion of the knowledge found on **Contagious Online**, our intelligence tool. Don't you want to see what you're missing?

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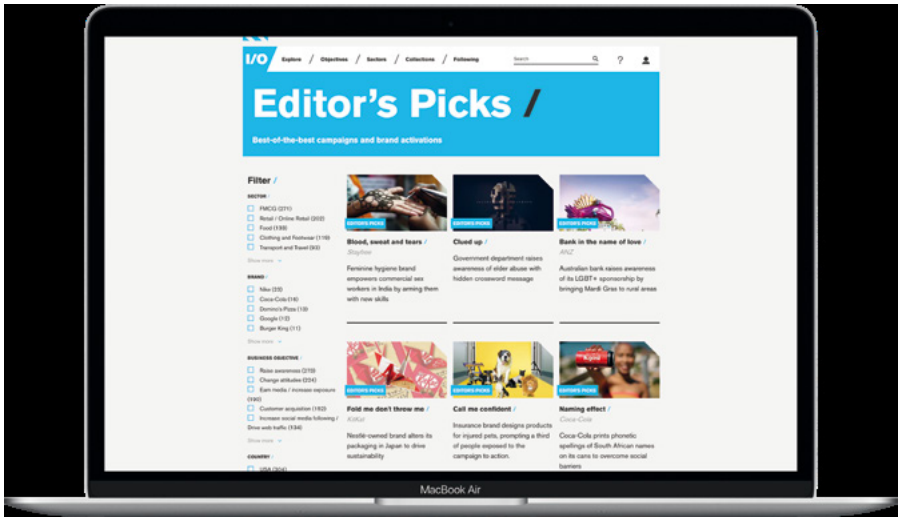


OUTDOOR GRAND PRIX

Liquid Billboard / Adidas

How a sportswear brand reached 300 million people in more than 50 countries with a single billboard

In July 2021, Adidas launched a campaign for its new inclusive swimwear collection in the United Arab Emirates. Working with Havas Middle East, the sportswear brand first released a 60-second film called Beyond the Surface, which celebrates how water accepts everyone unconditionally.

The brand followed the film by installing a Liquid Billboard at one of Dubai's most popular public beaches. Women were invited to dive 'Beyond the Surface' into the 5-metre high and 3-metre-deep swimming pool, and cameras inside the billboard filmed the swimmers.

The footage was edited in real time and transmitted directly onto a digital screen above the Dubai Mall Ice Rink, next to the Adidas flagship store. Photos of the swimmers were also edited into personalised posters that were printed and given to them once they finished the experience, along with images for them to share on social media.

Adidas ambassadors Dareen Barbar, an amputee triathlete, and Raha Moharrak, the first Saudi Arabian female to climb Mount Everest, led the way by making public dives, while a conservative swimwear kit was sent in a special box as an invitation for members of the press and influencers to swim in the billboard on the day of the launch.

To find out more about the campaign concept and how the brand reached 300 million people in more than 50 countries with a single billboard, we spoke to **Fabio Silveira**, general manager, and **Joao Medeiros**, executive creative director at Havas Creative Middle East, who said:

/ Around the world 32% of women feel uncomfortable in their swimsuits. In the Middle East, that number jumps to 89%

/ This campaign was designed for the UAE but intended to make an impact in other emerging markets such as India and South Africa

/ The brief was to celebrate all women, regardless of race, size, ability, and create a sense of freedom, rather than empowerment

/ Thanks to the client's willingness to take risks and the powerful simplicity of the idea, the team had the support to follow through with the logistically tricky execution

Tell us about where Adidas sits in the market in the UAE.

Fabio Silveira: Adidas has a great initiative called Watch Us Move, which is about diminishing the gender gap in sports – across a number of sports and especially for swimming. The brand represents pretty much the same thing across the world, but for the Middle East, closing the gender gap in sports takes on a new importance. One of the data points that we had was that around the world 32% of women feel uncomfortable in their swimsuits. In the Middle East, that number jumps to 89%. So when we were talking about how to create a piece of communication to close the gender gap in swimming, these data points told us that we needed to bring a discussion to the Middle East and highlight what's important for women here.

Joao Medeiros: In terms of its brand positioning and brand platform, Adidas doesn't vary too much across the world, but I think the message here in the Middle East becomes even more poignant and more relevant.

Silveira: In terms of competition in the Middle East, there are the same brands as in other markets, but we've of course got different market share: Adidas is one of the leading brands in the market, with their size and share, but the competitors that we're going against are very similar.

And what do you know about the general availability of modest swimwear from other brands?

Silveira: We know that other brands do offer it, and Adidas didn't have any modest swimwear collection until now. The challenge was to launch something that would have a higher awareness and create bigger waves around the brand and our proposal and what Adidas has to offer versus what the competition has done previously. That was one of the things that we had in mind from the beginning. Although the billboard was made here in Dubai, the full campaign Beyond the Surface campaign was an emerging markets campaign for India, the Gulf countries like Saudi Arabia, UAE, and also Jordan, Lebanon and South Africa.

Is there a particular challenge for a Western brand to launch something like this in this market?

Silveira: All the key players are a global brands, and as any global brand comes to any market it's necessary to have a cultural understanding of the consumers and the challenges in that market, and it's important for you to have communication that cuts through. It's all about understanding who you're talking to and reflecting their reality in a natural way based on a real human insight. So that's true all over the world. Of course, when you're talking to women in the Middle East about the the way that they feel wearing swimsuits, that is a very specific angle.

What was your initial response to the brief?

Medeiros: There were two briefs: initially, we created the film, Beyond the Surface. That was in response to a brief to create a 60-second spot, in partnership with Adidas' global branding agency D2 in Germany, who had established the Watch Us Move campaign. The brief was to celebrate all women, regardless of race, size, ability, and create this sense of not empowerment, but giving women a sense of freedom to get in the water. We wanted to amplify that feeling you get when you're in the water. Nothing else matters, right? It's all about freedom in the water.

Then the billboard brief came just after we launched the film. The client said, we want to make a big splash in the Middle East, give us an idea that will get talked about. It was pretty much a carte blanche brief: 'Do something to get this platform out to the Middle East'. And the team came up with this idea to build a billboard you can swim in. We celebrate five women in the film, so what we wanted to do is to celebrate the whole city and give every woman in Dubai the opportunity to become the star of the campaign. It just seemed like a very natural development. In the billboard, you can be the brand ambassador essentially.

How did you publicise that and encourage people to take part?

Medeiros: We had a launch date for the billboard and we invited key influencers across the city to come and jump in on launch day, as well as key members of press as well. After that, we got a little bit of traction, and then it was open to the public.

Silveira: So over that week, anyone that was on the beach could just take a 10-15 minute dive in the billboard, take their pictures, create content, and share it on their own channel.

Medeiros: For each participant we created a little press pack. We had cameras in the billboard that they could post on their social channels, everybody that jumped in got a poster of themselves in the campaign. We even had the jumps streamed into the biggest LED display here in Dubai, to show that this was happening live on the beach.

Silveira: The LED display was right in front of the Adidas store, closing the whole loop. So the idea was just to create a campaign on social to go from the film to the activation to social media and to the store.

Aside from the PR value, were there any other business objectives attached to the brief?

Silveira: It was the launch of a new collection so of course there were leads to ecommerce sites and it was linked to sales of the collection and making sure that it was a successful business launch. The results are extremely positive, it achieved a record number of sales, and the earned media and PR that came with that, the coverage across a number of markets and across more than 500 publications in more than 50 different markets across the world – it generated great PR results, supported by business results.

Medeiros: What was quite interesting about it was that it was a very local insight that had global relevance. The on the ground recognition was great. The footfall was great. But the idea was to create a stunt that does travel way beyond the people who were actually there.

It's hard to judge what impact a stunt will have, even if it is from a global brand. Did it exceed your expectations?

Silveira: Yeah, we had pretty high expectations, but I think we did pretty well. One thing that I think was key to the success was that it was pretty simple to understand. When you do a billboard that any woman in the city can [appear in and] be the hero of the campaign, you don't have to explain much more. You are literally putting women in swimsuits in a billboard for anyone to see. The simplicity of the idea is part of the reason for its success: regardless of where you are in the world, whether you know that Adidas is launching a new collection of conservative swimwear or not, when you see that idea, you understand what's behind it.

Medeiros: When we presented the idea, we knew it could be big, but the reach was bigger than I thought it would be.

What research did you do into women's attitudes towards swimwear?

Silveira: The global data came with the brief, and after we received the brief we worked with wonderful research partners to understand women in the UAE and compare the data points. So our insights came from our research partner as well as from Adidas.

Were any other ideas in the running?

Medeiros: A few, but this one stood out because it wasn't too complicated. It was a very simple idea. It had a lot of mass appeal. One interesting takeaway from the billboard was, after the women had jumped in, and this is exactly what we wanted the experience

to be, some of them came out and said, 'You know what, I felt really free. I didn't realise it was a billboard. I didn't realise there were other people outside watching.' And that's the whole takeaway of the campaign. We want people to find freedom. And it really manifested.

Silveira: We started with three ideas, but the feeling from the client, and it was the same feeling from us, was that the billboard was clearly the winner. Yes, it's going to be hell to execute it, but the simplicity of the idea will make it a very powerful one.

Medeiros: Yeah, we presented it without knowing quite how we would make it, but anything's possible.

Tell us a bit about those challenges of executing the idea.

Medeiros: We partnered with [global brand experience agency] Jack Morton, who have quite a bit of experience with these sort of builds. There were difficulties in finding the right sized piece of perspex without a division in the middle – there were quite a few safety challenges in finding a way to contain this weight of water.

Silveira: It needed to be 100% safe. The concern for the safety of the people that would be swimming in it meant we needed a lifeguard at all times – that's a small thing. The whole build was a pretty challenging exercise. And it was done in three weeks.

Medeiros: It was done very quickly. Another challenge was that it had to look like a billboard – if it didn't it would just be a pool and we'd have lost the idea.

Was the choice to doing it at the beach rather than in a public swimming pool an aesthetic one?

Medeiros: Yes but we also knew we wanted to open it to the public. We could maybe have done it in a pool, but the beach had the scale.

Silveira: And it was a place where people would be wearing swimsuits – we could not do it in a mall, for example, and ask people to jump in. Having it at the beach was logical as people were set up to dive in.

Medeiros: And available – people were spending the day at one of Dubai's most popular beaches.

Did the brand receive any backlash to the stunt?

Silveira: Nothing other than one or two comments on social media that are more reflective of the mentality of the people that are making those comments. The great thing about about the Adidas clients that we work with is they said, you need to make this idea. We didn't have to convince them.

What was your your biggest takeaway from this process?

Silveira: When you have clients that trust your capacity and are willing to take some risks – and it was a risk for them to buy an idea that we didn't know how we were going to execute – I believe having their support throughout the process was key. And having the right partners through the process was important for us to bring it to life.

Medeiros: Across the whole team – us, Jack Morton, the clients – there was a real sense that if you have a good idea you can always find a solution, you can make it happen even in a short amount of time. There was a lot of passion in the project and I think it showed. We have to go by the ideas we believe in – that's the most important thing. We'll find a way if it's a solid idea. We'll make it happen.

MOBILE GRAND PRIX

Real Tone / Google

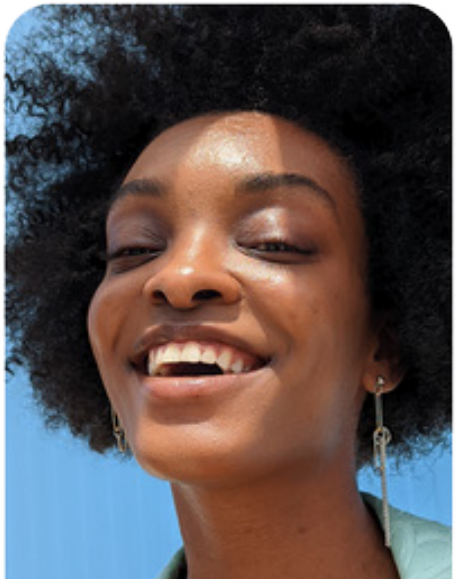
How a tech giant promoted its latest smartphones during the 2022 Super Bowl by highlighting its inclusive imaging tech

In October 2021, Google unveiled its flagship Pixel 6 and Pixel 6 Pro smartphones to rival those by competitors Apple and Samsung. One of their distinguishing capabilities is the Real Tone feature, a software that ensures the cameras can accurately capture different skin tones.

To drum up awareness about the issue of image equity and draw attention to Google's solution, the tech giant launched a 60-second spot that aired during the 2022 Super Bowl. The ad, which premiered during the third quarter of the game, begins with poorly shot images of people of colour while various narrators explain the issues that they have had with poor camera technology.

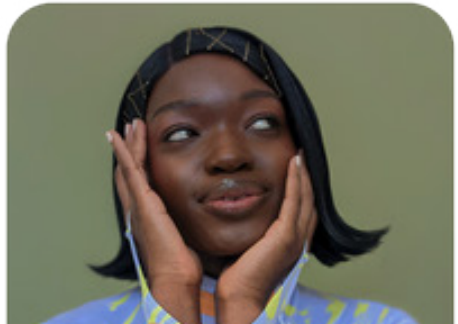
One man explains how every yearbook photo of himself has been terribly shot since he was a child. Another woman comments on how every photo of herself shows up too dark or shiny. Following this, the words 'Until now' appear and a song by US singer Lizzo titled 'If You Love Me' begins to play, teeing up a collection of visually stunning images of people of colour – all taken using the Pixel 6 or Pixel 6 Pro.

The ad, which was created by Miami-based agency Gut, ends with the








statement 'Everyone deserves to be seen as they truly are' and the hashtag #SeenOnPixel.

Contagious caught up with **Daryl Butler**, vice president of marketing, devices and services at Google, as well as **Monique Beauchamp**, group account director at Gut, and **Paulo Damasceno**, senior art director at the agency, who said:

/ Google's strategy to differentiate its products from competitors is to design technology that simplifies and serves the life of the user rather than expecting the user to adapt to its capabilities

/ While the Super Bowl is inundated with marketing messages, Google was confident that the tone of its ad would help the brand break through the noise and get attention

/ It was crucial that the ad capture the stories of real people and reflect the reality of those that the feature was designed for

/ Whether the ad incited a positive or negative reaction didn't matter, the goal was to spark a conversation

What is Google's strategy to get ahead of the smartphone competition?

Daryl Butler: It doesn't start or stop with just the phone. If someone is going to be interested in Google as a product proposition, they will be thinking about the entire Google offering. It starts with an affinity they might have towards the brand, whether that's through Mail, Maps, Photos, and the like. Often, the services we offer actually work on a multitude of different platforms. What we're looking at now is if Google is in someone's life already based on the things they use every day, then how can we use that affinity to envelop them in the brand even more. And for us, that's bundling everything up in the Pixel device.

In some regards, the basic functionality of a smartphone is pretty similar from carrier to carrier. What we try to do to make Google stand out is to create technology that simplifies and facilitates the lives of consumers. When you think about Real Tone, what we are attempting is to give the user the ability to truly capture and chronicle their lives and reflect the reality of what they see. We haven't seen anybody else do that, so I think we can say that we are creating a point of differentiation.

Can you tell us more about how the Real Tone project began?

Butler: Camera technology is probably one of the most innovative things that our world has ever known. You could go as far as to say that we can only see into history because of this technology. But, it's also safe to say that it wasn't developed with multiple skin tones in mind – the baseline was primarily white and that's well acknowledged and documented. As we took a look at where we wanted to advance, we realised that not everybody was being seen as they wanted to be – literally and figuratively. That's what set things in motion for our team to start looking at the algorithms, the entire environment and so on to make sure that each photo is a true reflection of what's in front of the camera. This is a beginning of introducing the right ways for multiple skin tones to be reflected through camera technology, it's not the end.

Inclusivity has been on the agenda for brands for a while, why was now the right time to launch the Real Tone capability?

Butler: This has been a long-time coming, but Real Tone has been years in the making. This wasn't something that we took off the shelf, we've been working on building a more inclusive smartphone for around four or five years. The smartphone is a constant companion to most people, it's vital and it needs to truly serve the user rather than the user having to orbit around the technology. That was one of the things that we wanted to make sure we were thinking about, not only with Real Tone, but in general with the Google Pixel products; it has to adapt to the consumer's needs, wants, interests and purposes.

Where does this land between being a tech innovation and brand building initiative?

Butler: We didn't set out to create Real Tone because we wanted to reinforce the brand's point of view when it comes to diversity and inclusion. We set out to create technology that is a true reflection of the brand's existing point of view. We realise that there's still a lot of work for us to do in that regard, but we want to continue to reinforce that we are about being helpful at every turn. And this product is one of the ways that we can demonstrate that.

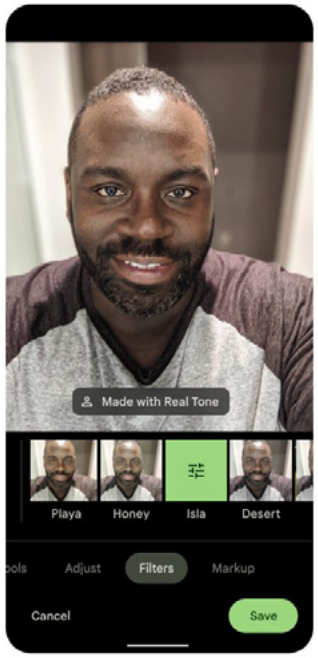
How important was collaboration to this process?

Butler: It was essential; technology can't advance in a vacuum. There's a reciprocating relationship that exists between technology and culture, they need each other; culture demands technology in order to advance and vice versa. When we set out to address this challenge, we needed to make sure that we had the right people in the room to speak with the right points of view. There were experts who understood all the nuances when it comes to image quality, but we also needed the cultural input of what matters to the people we were developing it for.

Were you concerned that Real Tone might get lost among all the other marketing noise around the Super Bowl?

Butler: If you look at the creative landscape of the Super Bowl, most of it is laden with high-profile celebrities and quirky humour. There's a sea of sameness in a lot of regards and we didn't want to be there; we wanted to land this story with a degree of gravity. Our goal was to make people stop, provoke thought and inspire people to investigate the conversation. Clearly, we're not going to completely solve the social issue of image equity with technology. But we wanted to take to the stage to point out the problem and talk about the ways we could address it with technology. We were confident we were going to stand out because we knew we would be different from the rest of the creative landscape.

Monique Beauchamp: The challenge for us was how to portray such an important and resonant message on a stage where people are having fun. Most spots show puppies, famous musicians, celebrities or what not. We had to find the balance to communicate the importance of Real Tone for diversity and the seriousness of the technological advance in a way people could connect with that didn't feel too jarring.



Tell me about the brief that you gave the agency for the spot.
Butler: A lot went into the brief. Firstly, we had to make sure that something as innovative as Real Tone could be understood in 60 seconds. Secondly, we told the agency that we have a great piece of technology, but it is designed to address a problem that some acknowledge and some don't even realise is an issue. We needed to land our solution in a meaningful and impactful way on the cluttered stage that is the Super Bowl.

Did you set any business objectives or KPIs?
Butler: We wanted reach, attention and conversation more than anything else. We knew we were stepping into a place that was going to be divisive because it hits home for a lot of people. But, other people were probably going to accuse us of calling cameras racist. Our view is that this is about skin tone, it's not even about race. What we really wanted to do was start a conversation because this isn't something that is going to stop with a 60-second Super Bowl spot. This is an opportunity for people to be seen as they really are and one way of doing that is through smartphone camera technology.

Paulo, what was your initial response when you heard the brief?
Paulo Damasceno: When a brief like this lands in front of you, all you can think is, 'Holy shit, this is amazing.' It's not every day that you get a brief that starts with, 'This is the most inclusive camera on Earth.' We realised the impact that this feature could have, but it was also a chance to celebrate innovation rather than ruminate on all the pain and suffering caused by a lack of representation in camera technology.

Did you do any research to inform the direction of the Super Bowl spot?
Butler: Quite a bit. It was crucial to represent people's real experiences and in order to get the final visually stunning piece, we had to hear about people's different life experiences. That's what started this whole thing in the first place. We didn't come up with the spot in the lab, we used real testimonies from real people who don't feel like they've been seen or who have had challenges with image quality from smartphone technology. People even chimed in and supported us by sharing imagery that reinforces this. We had to capture real challenges and show the power of technology.

Tell us a bit about the tone that you were hoping to strike.
Butler: The tone needed to be serious and emotionally charged, but we also wanted it to be celebratory. We wanted everyone to be able to see themselves on the other side of the camera and have a visceral reaction when they saw the spot. Whether that visceral reaction was positive or negative isn't really important because we just wanted the conversation to happen and folks to feel something, whatever side of the coin they might be on.

Did you do anything prior to the Super Bowl to drum up excitement?
Beauchamp: We released a teaser ahead of the Super Bowl, which was a sneak peak of Lizzo and her new song. Of course, we've had plenty of extensions since across media platforms like YouTube and social, as well as TV. We're trying to hit as many touchpoints as possible so it doesn't seem like a single Super Bowl moment, but as an extended message.

What results have you seen so far?
Beauchamp: At the moment, we can share that there was an 86% increase in searches for the Google Pixel 6 and a 400% increase in Google Store traffic. It was also the number one Super Bowl spot on News Week, there were over 1,000 publications writing about it worldwide and it was one of the top 20 Super Bowl spots on USA Today.

How does this campaign benefit the brand's long-term strategy?
Butler: Technology isn't going to solve a social issue, but it will start a conversation. Having planted the seed, Google's challenge is how to continue to innovate over the coming weeks, months and years. Technology has an impact on how we see ourselves because it's a mirror and it has to be a true reflection of who we are. There's an emotional and a psychological connection that comes with it, our long-term strategy is to continue to educate and democratise access to technology and this is the first step in that journey.

Brrr...

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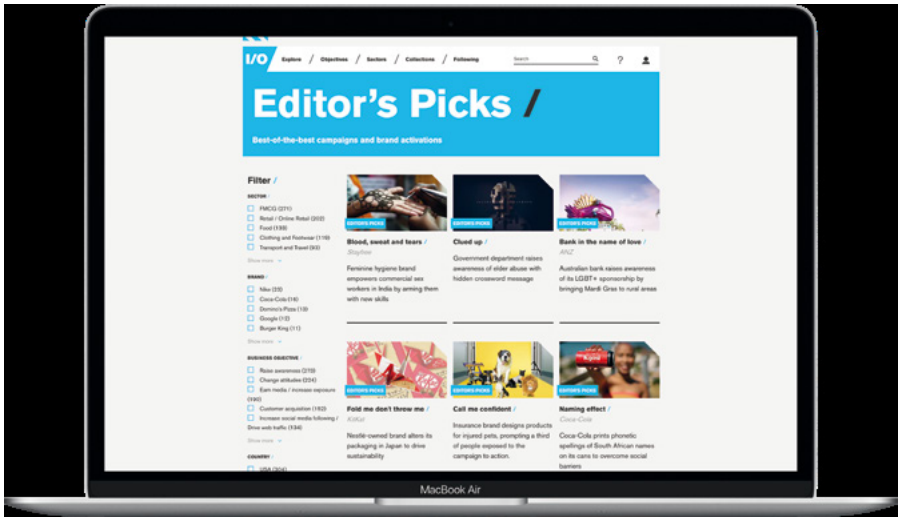


CREATIVE STRATEGY & PR GRAND PRIX

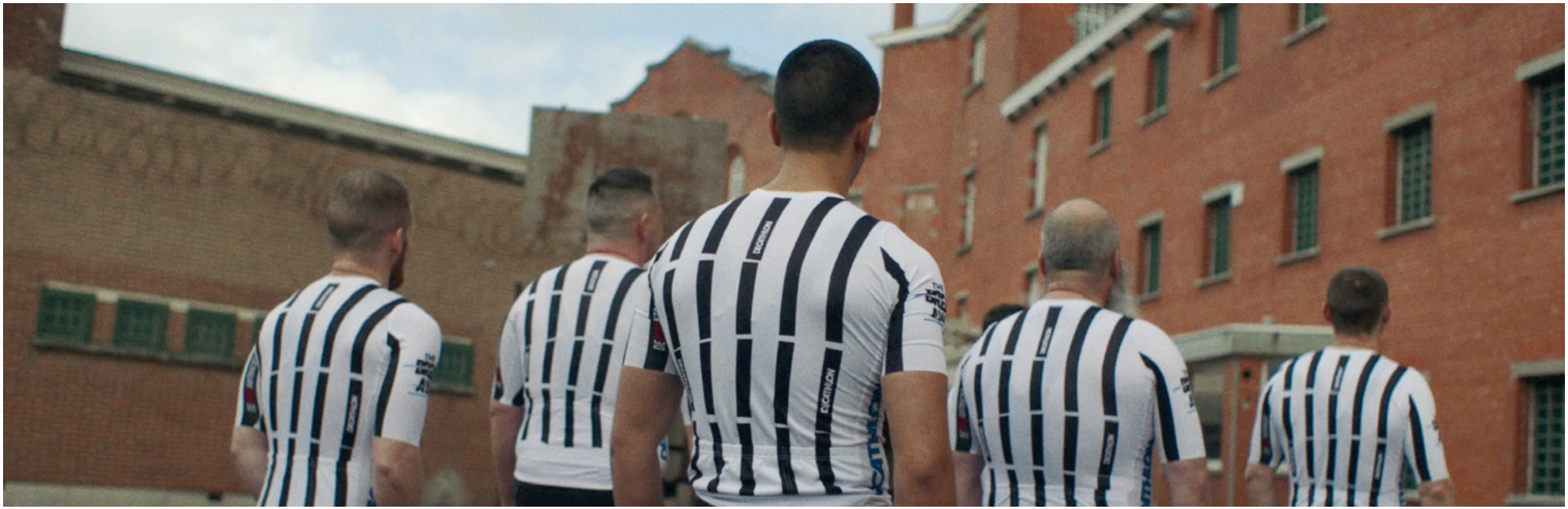
The Breakaway / Decathlon

How a sporting goods store earned $1.4m in media and multiple Cannes Lions Grands Prix with a campaign focused on prisoners

In March 2021, sporting goods retail chain Decathlon launched a campaign giving six inmates at a Belgian maximum security prison the opportunity to compete on Zwift, an indoor cycling app where riders take part in virtual races. Members of the public could then use the Zwift app to ride with the prisoners.

The Breakaway campaign, created with BBDO Belgium, Brussels, was supported by a podcast where listeners could find out more about the inmates' stories. As part of the campaign Decathlon also organised a race between the prisoners' Breakaway team and representatives from the Belgian Ministry of Justice, including law enforcement officers, a prison guard and even the Minister of Justice himself.

According to the agency, the project reached 15 million people and generated around $1.4m in earned media for Decathlon. Following its win of the Grands Prix in PR and Creative Strategy at the 2022 Cannes Lions Festival, we caught up with **Frederik Clarysse** and **Tom Jacobs**, formerly at BBDO Belgium



and now freelance creatives, to find out more about what sparked the idea for this campaign and how they pulled it off. They told us:

/ The timing was right for the campaign because Decathlon was facing stock issues due to Covid and needed a brand-building initiative rather than driving sales

/ Initially, the business objective was to build buzz and earn media, but the campaign also helped drive store footfall

/ The campaign was inspired by the tremendous growth of the Zwift app

Can you tell us more about the Decathlon brand and its purpose?
Frederik Clarysse: Decathlon globally stands for making sport accessible to the many. So that's a permanent thing for us in the back of our heads, no matter what kind of brief we're working on. How they usually make sport accessible, is that they offer sports products for all levels: beginner, advanced, etc. It's accessible in terms of the price. And it's accessible in terms of the proximity of the stores.

When did this focus on accessibility start for Decathlon?
Tom Jacobs: It's a family-owned company, and it was founded with that vision.

Have you done any other work with them that leant into this inclusivity principle?
Clarysse: We never took it this far. We've worked with the client for many years and it's been a work in progress to inspire them and get them to do daring work and go further. This campaign is on a whole other level than what we did in the past.

Can you tell us a bit more about how Decathlon fits in the market and its business challenges?
Clarysse: They're the market leader, they have a big audience. At the time that we launched this campaign their business challenge was that they had very little stock because of Covid and

they had very few people coming in to the shops. It was March 2021. Belgium was going in and out of lockdown. There were supply chain problems all over. Decathlon usually does very commercial campaigns with the aim of moving products. This time they saw a window of opportunity to do something that was less sales-oriented, less commercial and less product-promotion driven.

Did they have a particular brief for you?
Clarysse: Yes and no. This idea had been floating around since March 2020 and it took us until October 2020 to present it to the client. They immediately loved it, it fit their vision. But we needed to wait for the right time. Then in early 2021, they said 'There's now a moment where we can get it done.' They saw a theme in the fact that we were slowly moving out of Covid and sport meant freedom in times of Covid. They saw that this was a relevant moment to do the campaign. Their theme for their spring [communications] was freedom and they did a separate campaign around that and they saw The Breakaway as complementary.

What was the business objective you were trying to achieve?
Clarysse: Since Decathlon didn't have to focus on selling products in the short term, because they didn't have any items in stock, they had a PR objective. Although simultaneously they did a really hardcore sales campaign and it turns out that more customers were coming to the store because of The Breakaway than because of the sales campaign.

What sparked the idea for The Breakaway?
Clarysse: It was the spectacular growth of Zwift during lockdown. I've been on the platform since 2016, but there were relatively low user numbers back then. We were a bunch of nerds doing it. And then during lockdown, the numbers went up. Sometimes the servers couldn't handle it. We really started feeling like this is entering our culture and when it becomes relevant in culture, you can start playing with it. If you do it too soon, you have a very small niche community. Now that it had become mainstream it was a good time to start thinking about it.

Did you set any KPIs with the client?
Clarysse: It's funny because their objective, in the short term, was to be in all the newspapers and build lots of buzz. To be honest, I think that was their expectation. But now they say this keeps on giving. One year later, people are discovering the podcast and discovering the launch film and discovering that these prisoners are still riding around and they can still join the rides. It's something that keeps finding new audiences.

How did you come up with idea of connecting prisoners? This is not really the type of marginalised group that you often see in advertising campaigns.
Clarysse: No, but that is what made

it interesting. The first thing that we thought about was Zwift. It brought us together during the lockdowns. Training indoors used to be this tedious thing that you did in winter when you couldn't ride outside. But in lockdown when you were super lonely, any kind of social interaction was welcome. You experience how important it can be to ride in a group and then you start thinking about how it can become relevant to other communities or people. Prisoners are confined; they have no confidence that they will ever reintegrate into society. It's also interesting to see how society reacts to them. This is really an exercise in tolerance, in giving people a second chance. It's useful for the prisoners and for wider society it gives them a new perspective. That made it super interesting and made us want to fight for the idea.

Was the client concerned about working with prisoners?

Jacobs: I think the client was a bit worried. They're connecting their brand to long-term inmates. We didn't know what they did or why they were in prison. We didn't want to and it's also not important. But the prisoners really needed this. When you look at the inclusivity work that is winning at the [Cannes Lions] festival, there's a lot about the other marginalised groups, black people, gay people, but prisoners are a whole new group of people. So, of course, they were a bit afraid at the start.

Clarysse: But there was a core team of two or three people who really believed in it and defended it internally.

Did you do any kind of research before you launched the project?

Clarysse: First of all, we did a lot of feasibility research before we even went to the client with it. We went to a non-profit that advocates for sport and culture in prison. Then we got in contact with the prison, with an IT guy from the justice system. When we talked about it, I thought, honestly, there was a 1% chance that we could do it because internet connection in prison is out of the question, usually. But to my surprise, they were very enthusiastic and open, and they gave us permission to do a wired internet connection to the sports room on the third floor. That required permission from two government bodies in Belgium.

Then we did research proving that sport in prison is hugely important, and that sport in prison combined with social interaction is even more important. Sometimes they do physical soccer tournaments with teams from the outside and this has been proven to have a positive impact on prisoners.

Why did you decide to do a podcast?

Clarysse: We started off with a launch film and we did interviews with the prisoners and these interviews were so interesting and were so emotional. They started telling stories about their youth, about how their dad bought their first bike when they were six years old, stuff like that. We thought, 'This is so rich, this has so much potential, we have to do more with this.' But a documentary would have been impossible. We only had permission to shoot one day and that was already very exceptional. It would have been very expensive too. Also, the prisoners had to remain anonymous. It would be not visually very interesting because we couldn't show their faces. We thought, audio would be easier. One, it's easier to get a microphone into prison, and two, when you tell the story you can let your mind imagine the visuals to go along with it.

Jacobs: There's also the human aspect to it. If you listen to it, you don't see those guys as prisoners, they're humans. The criminal aspect almost completely disappears and the perception completely changes and that's a really great thing.

What were the biggest challenges of this project?

Clarysse: The prison aspect and getting internet there was the hardest part. The other challenge was getting it done with a very limited budget.

How complicated was it to work with the prisoners and with the government bodies?

Clarysse: We were in luck, because we had a Minister of Justice who made digitisation his number one priority. When they [the Ministry of Justice] saw this idea they thought, 'This is a chance to show that we that we are forward-thinking.' We just had to guarantee the anonymity of the prisoners. When that was guaranteed, as well as that the prisoners could not interact with others via chat, it was a go.

Jacobs: We had this really progressive, young prison director who likes new ideas and was very open-minded about rehabilitation. We got very lucky with that with this guy. Also, biking is a big thing in Belgium and within the Ministry of Justice there are a lot of amateur bikers. So when we asked them to put together a team with six people from the Ministry of Justice and then race our team Breakaway they were immediately enthusiastic.

Was that race an important element of the campaign?

Clarysse: That was six months into the project. So it brought a whole new wave of PR attention. It was really symbolic as well to get judges and lawyers, a prison guard and the Minister of Justice, to race the guys from inside. It showed that they were all on the same level in this race.

While in the real world, there is obviously a huge power balance gap. That was really the ultimate symbol of how we could give prisoners hope that they could somehow be more than what they did. They felt that they could be humans again, and interact with other people.

Jacobs: They lost the race, but even so we had real medals that we put around their necks and all the other prisoners came out of their cells and applauded these six guys. It was such a big moment for them.

For the prisoners this project really changed their lives and their perspective. Their self-confidence and self-esteem really improved.

Another element of the campaign was the collaboration with John McAvoy, can you tell us more about that?

Clarysse: John McAvoy reached out to us out of nowhere and said, 'I want to be a part of this.' He is an ex bank robber, who went to prison, and then discovered his talent for sport. When he came out he became an Ironman pro triathlete. He reached out to Zwift and they organised a group ride, 'The Breakaway with John McAvoy' and he invited an Olympic swimmer to join as well. Within Zwift, you can go in the app and you can see scheduled rides, so you could see the prisoners' group and subscribe to that. A couple of 100 people did this and it was a game-changer for the prisoners because up to that point they never really knew if people were there by coincidence or not. But with the group ride, they knew that people specifically signed up for this ride, which was announced as a ride with prisoners. So they were like, 'Whoa, people are okay to ride with us.' People were really encouraging them. I was on the ride also and at some point, one prisoner got to the half-hour mark and lost the group a little bit. When the other riders realised, they slowed down to bring him back. He was almost crying that these people were encouraging him.

You've announced that you'll be extending the project to other prisons. How is that coming along?

Clarysse: After the race, the minister announced on a live broadcast that he was going to do it again with more prisons. The cabinet of the minister reached out to us and to Decathlon asking for 200 bikes for almost all the prisons. Now they are figuring out how many prisons they are going to start with and they have to get a budget together, which the Commission needs to approve. So in 2023, hopefully, they're going to roll it out.

What was your biggest learning from this project?

Clarysse: Don't let go of a good idea, just keep working on it. And when you've launched it, keep working on it. Don't make it just a PR launch with a video and then say it's over. We kept working on this for two years.

Jacobs: Also, Belgium is a really small country and we tend to think small because we don't have a lot of budget. With this project we just kept on going. We didn't just have an idea and then did it and then one month later, did another smaller idea. In Belgium you don't usually work that long on projects.

Clarysse: We hope to be an inspiration for Belgian advertising. Because of our budget constraints we are a tough market. The agencies and the advertisers think too much in the short term, they think too much about what's going to sell in the short term. We opened the floodgates for more brands to do stuff like this in Belgium.

TITANIUM GRAND PRIX

Long Live the Prince / Kiyan Prince Foundation

How a charity dedicated to a murdered teen used a popular computer game to change the narrative around knife crime.

In May 2021 London agency Engine Creative took on a pro-bono initiative for the Kiyan Prince Foundation. Prince played for the Queens Park Rangers (QPR) youth football team and was fatally stabbed in 2006 when he was 15 years old. On the 15th anniversary of his death in May, EA Sports Fifa brought a 30-year-old Prince (the age he would be today) to life in the football video game.

Engine worked with Professor Hassan Ugail at the University of Bradford to create an accurate virtual image of Kiyan at 30 years old, using ageing-projection software. This image was then used by London-based creative studio and media company Framestore and photoreal artist Chris Scalf to produce the likenesses of Prince, which was brought to life via AI by The Electric Lens Company. Football trading card maker Match Attax also created a card for Prince, and in the game he will be sponsored by brands including Adidas and JD Sports.

Engine created a short film aimed at vulnerable children, seeded across social and earned media, to promote the initiative and tell Prince's story. The campaign also included a series of ads fronted by the virtual Kiyan, across press, out of home and on social. Top footballers, such as Raheem Sterling, and influencers, including the F2Freestylers, shared their support for the Long Live the Prince campaign on social media using the hashtag #longlivetheprince.

All proceeds raised by the campaign and sponsorship go directly to the Kiyan Prince Foundation, the charity run by Kiyan's father, Dr Mark Prince OBE, which works to instil a positive mindset in at-risk children in order to lead them away from knife crime and help them to achieve their potential.

/ **Results:** According to the agency, the campaign reached more than 3.2 billion people. On the day of the campaign launch, the story trended eighth on Twitter. Of those that play Fifa21, 89% said that they would try playing as Kiyan. Research conducted amongst 500 people aged 16- to- 25-years-old revealed that 60% had now heard about Kiyan Prince, 78% said that the campaign was relevant to their life, 97% said they were inspired by Kiyan's story and 54% said they would speak to the Kiyan Prince Foundation for help if they required it, while 74% would recommend it to a friend. This campaign won the Grand Prix for the Titanium category at 2022 Cannes Lions Festival for Creativity.

Contagious spoke to Engine creative directors **David Dearlove** and **Richard Nott** to find out more about the collaboration, goodwill and commitment that went into executing this complex campaign. They told us that:

/ Authenticity and accuracy were a priority throughout the process of creating Prince's virtual player

/ The goal was to reach kids who aren't consuming traditional media and desensitised to the traditional narrative around knife crime

/ The campaign's strong sense of hope and potential was informed by the ethos of the Kiyan Prince Foundation

/ The support of Prince's family and the passion for the idea provided the team with the resolve to continue when obstacles presented themselves

How did this idea come about in the first place?

David Dearlove: We've been working with the Kiyan Prince Foundation for a couple of years now, and we were aware that the people you want to target to talk about anti-knife crime are often people who don't really consume traditional media in the way that adults do. Sub-16, young boys in a city are not going to be reading the Metro or watching TV in big numbers. So we thought, where could we go to them? Fifa is the biggest computer game in the whole world, especially among our target audience.

Our initial thought was to get Kiyan in the game as the 30-year-old man he would be now. Most of these kids weren't born when he died, so they don't know who he is – the hope was that they'd see him in the game and then go online and read about him. It took a lot of time for Fifa to agree to this idea, understandably, because it's a huge, multi-billion dollar proposition and you don't mess with the rules of a game without being really careful about it. One of the things I was really concerned about was the authenticity, because Kiyan never made it to an adult and never became a professional player.

We went to Fifa one year and they said yes, but they couldn't get it over the line. So we went away but we still had faith in the idea and knew we were going to keep badgering them about it. In the meantime we thought about what else a professional footballer has and started building that up as much as possible.

One obvious thing that any professional footballer has is a professional club, so we approached Queens Park Rangers, Kiyan's former club, about this idea of 're-signing' him. They very kindly agreed and gave him the number 30 shirt for this year and put his name in the squad.

Another classic thing is a Match Attax card, so we approached them and they said yes. And another crucial thing in this modern day and age is sponsors. We thought, how about we get as many sponsors as possible, but rather than that sponsorship money paying for a footballer's next Ferrari, it can go to the charity instead. We approached quite a few of them – it's obviously hard to get people on board because [sponsoring a virtual player] is an unknown quantity.

Richard Nott: That was the hardest element – the final piece to come together, the biggest leap of faith and commitment. And fair play to Fifa and EA, because Dave and I rocked up there one day and pitched the idea to this guy and he was on board straight away. Their engagement was instant, it was just a timing thing. The aim was to put him in the game the following year and in the meantime they gave him in-game tributes and those types of things. We all know what it feels like when an idea just gets sidelined for a bit and you're like, okay, that's never going to happen.

Dearlove: The person who believes in it at the organisation might move on, and suddenly you've lost your contact there. So yeah, we widened it up and when Fifa came back, it was like the biggest and final piece of the jigsaw.

How did the next stages of the campaign unfold? Can you tell us more about the in-game storytelling?

Dearlove: In the world of Fifa there are different modes, and you can play in 'career' mode and can choose to be Kiyan. We'd have loved to tell the story within the game but at the end of the day, you hit play on this game of football. What we hoped was the story begins when people start searching for him outside the game.

We knew we wanted to do two things. One was to raise funds for the charity, and in order to do that we wanted it to have a huge splash, to be on TV, in the newspapers. But it was also an educational piece to young kids. We didn't want to just do something that a bunch of people read in The Times and then do nothing.

So we partnered with various social influencers who are popular with young kids, like the F2Freestylers, who are football influencers. They're absolutely huge – they've got more YouTube subscribers than Liverpool Football Club. They put out an interview on their channel with Mark [Dr Mark Prince OBE, Kiyan's father and the founder and director of The Kiyan Prince Foundation]. His power is speaking, he's incredibly eloquent and goes into schools. I think last time I looked, it had almost 50,000 views – a 15-minute film about knife crime.

It's rare to see pro bono work have such an impact and have such reach outside the industry – usually because there isn't a budget behind it. What do you think was the key to this campaign's success?

Nott: Just goodwill, and through approaching people. Gemma, [Glover, influencer strategist at Engine] has loads of contacts and just reached out to all of them. It helped that we knew we had a good story to tell. We had the triumvirate we were going for: we had Match Attax,

Fifa, we had the brand campaign, and it is an issue that is close to loads of people's hearts. One small part of the campaign we quite liked was with A Star, a social media influencer and barber to all the top footballers. We'd created [virtual] Kiyan and we thought, well, if this is the guy who cuts all the footballers' hair, let's get him to cut Kiyan's hair.

So he got involved in styling him and Mark went down and was filmed having his hair cut and having a chat. It was about finding people who felt affinity to the story. Even on the production side, Chris Scalf, the artist who created the final version of Kiyan, an American guy works out in LA, he did it completely for free, he wouldn't accept a fee. And part of that was, I think he probably wouldn't mind me talking about his backstory, his brother was a cop and was shot and killed a few years ago. This [idea] just affected people. We were amazed and overwhelmed by the amount of free work we got.

Dearlove: We'd had these terrible visions of people thinking it was in poor taste or something – we didn't know. It sounds like a really stupid thing to say, but the reason we got so much publicity for it was because people really wanted to publicise it. People wanted to tell the story.

It's an arresting idea. What are the plans for it in the long term?

Nott: It's an ongoing commitment we've got with the charity and I think there's still life left in the campaign. Fifa have spoken about it being a longer-term partnership and hopefully they'll keep doing that or something else equally beneficial to the foundation. Kiyan is registered for QPR for a year, he's got that squad number. And credit to QPR, they've been incredible – one of their players had the number 30 and gave it up when they heard about it. We wanted that number specifically because it was the age he would be, which is quite poignant. Now we are thinking about what else we can do with Kiyan the virtual athlete – watch this space.

Dearlove: We're also conscious that it's such a sensitive thing and you don't want an idea to outstay its welcome. We think there's more life in the idea but I don't think you can do that indefinitely. At the end of the day the Kiyan Prince Foundation is an anti-knife crime charity, so if we end up doing an idea that's totally different, great, as long as the end result is the same.

How did you approach that risk of people perceiving this as poor taste?

Nott: We were always really mindful, that was kind of why we paid such attention to getting it right with Kiyan – for example interviewing his previous teammates and coaches to make sure that his playing style honoured the player he was – we didn't want anything to be made up, we wanted it to be as real as possible. I think the biggest thing is obviously Mark's involvement and having the blessing of the family, they were involved at every stage. We felt awkward at times – showing Mark the image for the first time, we didn't know how upsetting that might be. But he is so dedicated to that charity, he was willing to go through all of that because he could see what the benefit would be. That gave us massive reassurance if anyone else questioned it. We thought, well, we know what the purpose is, we hope this will do some good, and on balance we felt it was positive.

Does the emphasis on fulfilling your potential come from the ethos of the charity?

Dearlove: Definitely. When we first began speaking to Mark, I remember he said, look, I'm not stupid, I know the only reason people talk to me is because my son died of knife crime. But he's never got involved with the government and anti-knife crime charities because there's an approach where you go to schools and say, 'If you stab someone once in the leg and you hit a main artery and they bleed to death, you're going to spend 20 years in a cell and you don't know what a cell feels like.' He doesn't. He uses the example of his son to say, my son was a model student, living his life and was about to be a Premier League star potentially.

His message to kids is less about 'stay away from knives', and more about, if you dedicate your life in the same way Kiyan was, whatever it is you might have going for you, you could achieve success. It's a flipping of the narrative in a really nice way because it's all about the potential you personally can have, rather than the horrors of knife crime. That is implicit, but I think kids who are at risk of knife crime know the risks of knife crime – we don't need to point out how bloody dangerous it is because they might have friends who've been stabbed or might have been threatened with a knife. You really don't need to tell them that stuff. You need to give them a positive reason to stay away from it. That was what we tried to do.

How will you measure the success of this campaign?

Nott: We wanted to reach as many people as possible to try and drive donations, and then we also wanted to make sure that we reached kids in a more targeted way. It's easy to look at the big numbers – this campaign has reached X amount of people. Dave and I are quite dubious about believing those sorts of things. But we know that the foundation received donations three times what they've received over the last three years. Mark keeps getting inquiries

to go and talk in other countries, which is important, because he's such a great evangelist for what he does. And finally we know that all the social stuff has reached a lot of kids.

Dearlove: A lot of this stuff is invisible, isn't it? You hear snippets. I know, for example, a series of schools in south London played it to their kids. And we heard that the Met police, some of their outreach people are using it. But if a kid who plays Fifa sees him in the game and looks him up on their phone, how will you ever measure that? One thing you can do is go to Google Trends and look at the search terms over historical data. When Kiyan died it was a really big news story. And what you can see on Google Trends is that last month, two times more people searched for Kiyan's name last month than when he was killed.

That for me is quite powerful and interesting, because you can add up the column inches and the amount of free media coverage, but that's not really what this was about, particularly. [The Google Trends data] is an indicator of someone personally wanting to find out more about him, and hopefully a lot of them are young kids. Nothing's ever going to solve knife crime overnight, but hopefully it makes some sort of impact – you can donate by texting KPF £5 (or another amount) to 70490 or by visiting thekpf.com.

This campaign was executed to perfection, but it took place over a long period of time. How did you keep up morale?

Nott: It doesn't feel like it took that long but I guess it was a couple of years. The biggest knock was when [Fifa didn't put Kiyan in the game] the first time – it all felt a bit up in the air and we'd mentally half put it in the bottom drawer. That was a point where we tried to be positive. But the irony is, if it had gone through that first year, we wouldn't have had that whole other aspect to the campaign. It gave me a whole new lease of life when Fifa came back and said yes – it was like, right, brilliant, sleeves up. The next hardest thing was getting a corporate partner, we wanted it to be the right partnership. We wanted the brand to be part of the story. Adidas gave him an in-game boot deal, which is a first, that's never been done before. And then JD Sports came in, knights in shining armour.

Dearlove: Working in advertising, crushing disappointment is 80% of our job. You're just used to it and you have to just keep going with ideas until the door is fully slammed in your face. This was a project we really believed in, so getting back up again, and having another go doesn't feel as bad as when you're working on something you really don't want to be working on and you're told to get back up and have another go.

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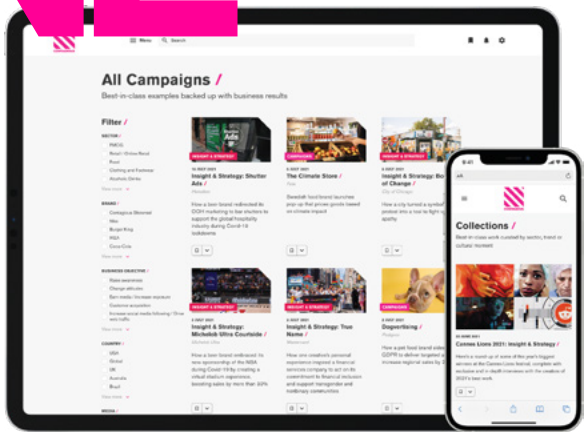

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