



DIGIDAY

MEDIA BUYING &
PLANNING AWARDS



The 2023 Digiday Media Buying and Planning Awards winners had their work cut out for them. In a saturated media environment facing multiple global crises touching political, social and economic issues, the advertising industry and the marketers they serve had to confront a wide range of variables to get their messages to stand out.

The themes impacting this year's winning campaigns dealt with sustainability concerns as brands and agencies reacted to more substantive demands among new audiences, particularly Gen Z. The challenge pushed media buyers and planners to uncover innovative ways to engage target audiences and meaningfully grab their attention.

Gaming played a significant role in campaigns this year. Media agencies looked beyond TV and typical online options for a deeper exploration of metaverse environments, podcasting and social channels, particularly the increasingly popular TikTok.

Ensuring underrepresented groups were represented in the media was also a top priority for many winners this year. Our honorees found effective ways to amplify diverse voices across 16 categories.

Some agencies were featured more than others. Hearts & Science won in 6-out-of-8 categories in which they were shortlisted this year. Their entries ranged from best digital media campaign to best media agency pivot. Their ability to have such a broad range of winning entries is exemplary.

We are excited to celebrate the 2023 trailblazing media agencies. Explore this guide to learn more about the winning campaigns and the insights they offer to media buyers and planners everywhere.

Best Audio Activation

Intuit Mailchimp



Background

In 2014, the email and marketing automation platform Mailchimp inspired listeners of the podcast 'Serial' with an ad containing a charming mispronunciation of the brand's name. "Mailkimp" introduced each episode of the riveting murder mystery podcast and became associated with the story of the main suspect, Adnan Syed, in the minds of listeners who eagerly followed narrator and investigator Sarah Koenig's discoveries from week to week. Then, in September, the case lit up again, this time finding Adnan Syed on the cusp of release from prison; Sarah and her listeners were again on the scene, and so was Mailkimp, delivering a hit of nostalgia at the opening of the episode.

Insights

News of a new hearing broke on September 17, 2022. Days later, Adnan Syed was freed from prison after 23 years. As word got out that Sarah Koenig had been at the courthouse, "Adnan Syed" and "Serial" were trending on Twitter as a new episode of the podcast was scheduled for the next day. Mailchimp's analysis of social commentary showed that Serial fans were excited not just to hear a follow-up of Sarah's reports and Adnan's fate but also for the return of Mailkimp. The nostalgic ad was a hit with listeners, with impressions increasing notably and 92% positive sentiment regarding the ads being inserted into the podcast.

SERIAL

X



Best Creator Partnership

Hearts & Science + AT&T Fiber

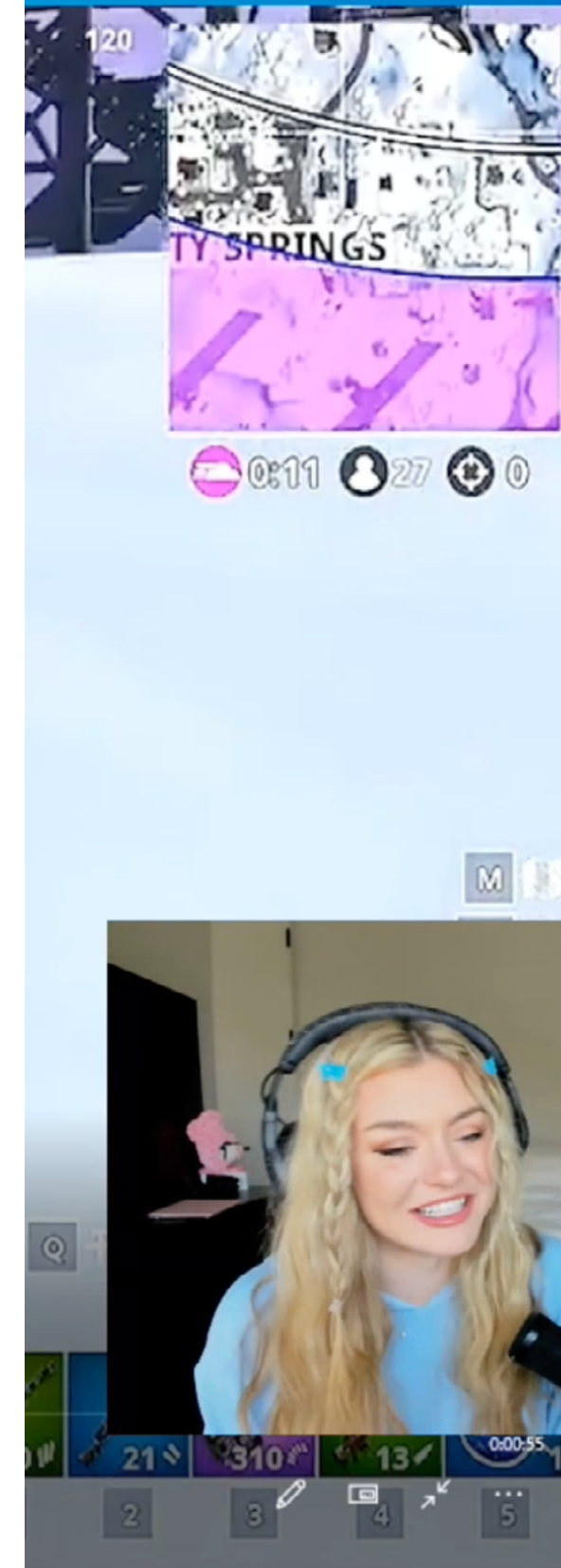


Background

Courting gamers is not easy for any brand; the community is notoriously ad-averse and has a keen eye for inauthenticity. However, AT&T Fiber is a high-speed fiber optics internet connectivity service used by everyone on Twitch and relied upon by gamers who count on speed and consistency to engage their passion. To focus awareness on this very authentic connection between its services and the gamers, AT&T Fiber partnered with streamers BrookeAB and Bnans, two emerging female voices in the Twitch community; they described the direct impact of the company's benefits and how that helped evolve their gameplay from their early days to now.

Insights

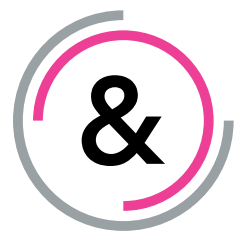
The Twitch partnership drove mass awareness of AT&T Fiber's offerings among gamers, breaking through the skepticism of viewers aged 25–34. The chat remained lively, winning over seven thousand messages and showing healthy engagement beyond AT&T Fiber's main awareness goal. The positive attention translated to significant conversions, and AT&T Fiber netted \$338,000 in Q2 2022 following the campaign, the team's second-best quarter ever recorded, prompting them to renew the Twitch partnership for late 2022.



Powered by
AT&T fiber
Live Like A G!Gillionaire

Best CSR Initiative

Hearts & Science + OLAY + Harper's BAZAAR



Hearts & Science

Background

Although women are behind many ground-breaking discoveries in the history of science and technology, they hold just 27% of STEM positions. Skincare brand OLAY wanted to drive awareness of their goals to close the STEM gap by showing young women that they belong in the field. Starting with the fact that only 10% of America's public statues honor individual women, OLAY teamed up with the Smithsonian's Air and Space Museum to unveil a statue of Mary Golda Ross. A citizen of the Cherokee Nation, Ross pioneered space exploration in the twentieth century. The team partnered with Harper's BAZAAR counting upon their female audience to get the word out.

Insights

On the International Day of Women and Girls in Science – February 11, 2022 – OLAY unveiled the statue outside the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C. On BAZAAR, they ran an article and a three-minute video showcasing the statue's creation and the reactions of young girls interested in STEM who attended the unveiling. The girls were interviewed on-camera about what STEM means to them and the impact of seeing a Native woman in STEM commemorated in this way. The campaign drove awareness of the brand's commitment to empowering women, reaching their target female U.S. audience and supported an issue that will have a genuine impact on increasing the number of women in STEM.

BAZAAR

FASHION BEAUTY

How Olay is Working to Shrink the STEM Gap

The skincare brand is devoted to spotlighting industry trailblazers.

BY EMILY OROFINO / PUBLISHED:



Though astronauts are the most visible players in space exploration, mathematicians, engineers, and scientists working behind the scenes are essential. Astronauts can traverse the atmosphere, conduct experiments, and return home, all under safe conditions. The image of interstellar STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) is a powerful one.

Best CSR Initiative

MAGNA + IPG Mediabrands

MAGNA

Background

Galvanized by the murder of George Floyd in 2020, Elijah Harris, executive vice president of global digital partnerships and media responsibility at MAGNA, posted a call-to-action on LinkedIn, urging marketers to stop supporting social platforms that ran incendiary content. Rather than ride a viral wave, Mediabrands leaders called upon Eli to put his words into action, and the Media Responsibility Index (MRI) was born. Initially designed to assess whether social platforms were walking the walk regarding CSR standards, the index now serves more than 150 media partners worldwide and is being integrated into MAGNA's planning tools, enabling brands to put responsibility at the heart of their media plans.

Insights

Early versions of the MRI succeeded in gaining industry, media and platform attention and reported increases in efforts to promote respect and accountability and reduce hate speech and disinformation. In 2022, MAGNA enhanced the MRI, transforming it into an actionable toolset that assessed 150-plus partners, including broadcast, cable, CTV and OLV, in 15 countries across ESG objectives and covering 80% of Mediabrands total investment. Since its origin as a passionate LinkedIn post, MRI has met the challenge of being the change it wanted to see. Advertisers, agencies and media outlets can now work with greater transparency to uphold CSR values and create safer media environments for all.



Best Digital Media Campaign

Hearts & Science + AT&T + ATTN:



Hearts & Science

Background

In support of the LGBTQ+ community and the Trevor Project, Telecommunications company AT&T partnered with creative agency ATTN: to produce 'The Love Connection,' demonstrating how technology supports well-being among marginalized individuals by providing social connections. For example, gender-nonconforming Alok uses social media to inspire others to live life on their own terms. Overcoming dating shame, black trans woman Peppermint found her love connection overseas. In another instance, Aydian, a father, husband and transgender activist, followed the transition of others online, then captured his own inspiring story. Nd Laith, an actor, singer/songwriter, model and trans man, was outed as a teen; his connection with his aunt saved him from suicide.

Insights

The LGBTQ+ individuals highlighted in 'The Love Connection' had undergone genuine hardships and could speak in a way to which viewers could relate. AT&T's strategy invited these marginalized individuals to share their perspectives and helped raise their voices, gaining exposure for the benefit of the LGBTQ+ community. The campaign highlighted AT&T's allyship and support of The Trevor Project, which showed that customers were more likely to rank AT&T as a company upholding acceptance and regarded AT&T as an ally to the LGBTQ+ community.



Best Digital Out-of-Home Campaign

Canidae



Background

Canidae is a nutrient-rich, premium dog and cat food brand. The brand partners with farmers to produce sustainable practices such as lowering pesticide use, reducing runoff and adopting regenerative farming practices. Early in 2022, Canidae set out to curb single-use plastics by launching first-of-its-kind environmentally friendly Kibble Refill Stations. Partnering with January Digital to launch the pilot program in select Petcos, Canidae intended to expand the Kibble Refill Technology nationwide by the end of the year; the launch needed to powerfully drive in-store usage of the Kibble Refill Stations to scale.

Insights

To meet Canidae's business objectives and ensure a successful product launch, January Digital put together an out-of-home campaign that targeted consumers with a taste for sustainable practices, educating them about the refill stations while amplifying Canidae's long-standing commitment to green technology. Out-of-home presence drove awareness of the filling stations locations at nearby Petco locations through foot and vehicle traffic. Working with PlacelQ, January Digital developed a programmatic out-of-home presence to prioritize screens that over-index for dog-park and pet-store visitors based on mobile device data within the target demographic against nearby Petco locations during peak business hours/traffic patterns.



Best E-Commerce Strategy

Horizon Media + Petco

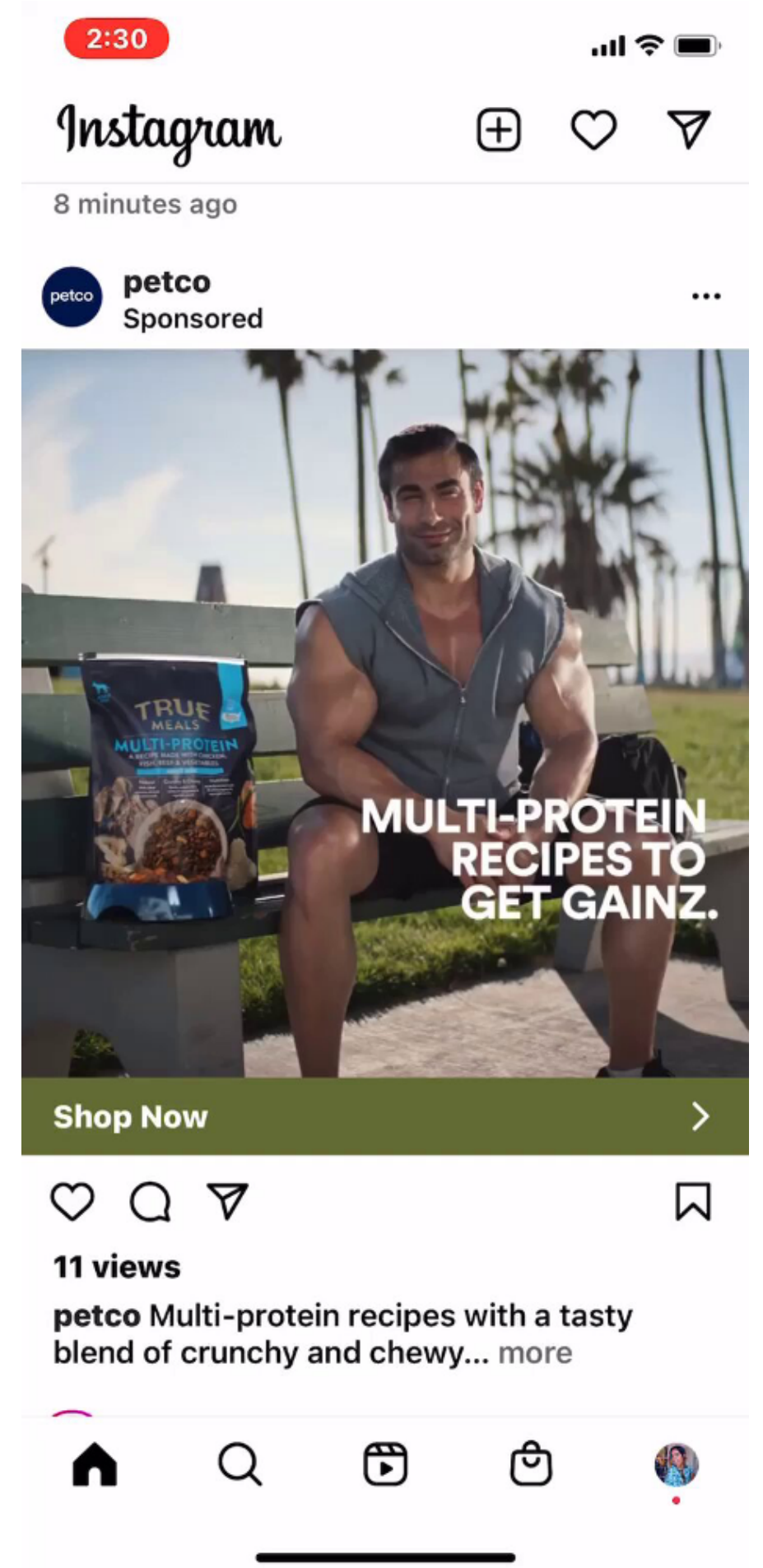


Background

Pet care and product retailer Petco teamed with Horizon Media to combine live events, interactive video ads, and Facebook events into an entertaining program designed to familiarize Millennial pet owners with Petco's products and services. Enlisting influencers like fashionista Arielle Vandenberg, Olympian Gabby Douglas and "petfluencer" Doug the Pug, the program showcased top-selling high-margin products and live shoppable links. Horizon also partnered with the e-commerce toolkit MikMak to optimize user experience with custom interactive landing pages that increased dwell time and recirculation.

Insights

The video element of the campaign created a brand new revenue stream for Petco that none of its competition was offering. At the same time, the Facebook live shopping events extended Petco's reach to 2.3 million viewers. Overall the strategy provided a valuable combination of tactics that turned product discovery into active consideration.



Best First-to-Market Strategy

e.l.f. Cosmetics + Movers+Shakers

MOVERS+SHAKERS

e.l.f.
eyes.lips.face.

Background

Youth-popular drugstore cosmetics company e.l.f. became the first beauty or skincare brand on BeReal, the Gen Z favorite photo-sharing app. With creative agency Movers+Shakers, the beauty company decided that BeReal's appeal to authenticity and commitment to honest personal moments provided a meaningful platform for launching their @elfyeah handle and promotional giveaway. The first 150 people who sent a friend request learned the secret promo code that availed them of a free Hydrated Ever After Skincare Mini Kit and free shipping.

Insights

Movers+Shakers and e.l.f. chose BeReal for its appeal to Gen Z consumers, identifying it as a new way to connect and deepen its connections with its fans. In true BeReal spirit, @elfyeah offered "insider access" through its channel content and introductory give-away. The results were explosive, with e.l.f.'s leadership making headlines from Fast Company to WWD to AdWeek and amassing over 27 million in earned media impressions.



Best High Impact Creative

Emodo + The Broadway League



Background

On March 13, 2020, all 41 Broadway theaters in New York City closed and would remain shuttered for 18 months due to the pandemic. As theaters reopened, attendees were more tech-savvy than pre-pandemic audiences, thanks partly to their familiarity with AR applications and experiences during quarantines. The Broadway League recognized the value of these experiences in engaging would-be showgoers and drawing them back to theaters. In September 2021, The Broadway League and Omnicom's Resolution Media partnered with Emodo and WebAR agency Aircard on a first-of-its-kind industry-wide campaign to jumpstart the industry. The team created a mobile-first augmented reality (AR) experience leveraging the 'This is Broadway' advertising campaign and the industry's biggest stars and shows.

Insights

In December, Broadway's peak season, Emodo Creative Lab developed the Broadway Show Globe' to amplify awareness and drive holiday ticket sales. The ad transported users to a snowy 360-degree Times Square on their mobile screens. It let them hear exclusive holiday greetings and show details from Broadway's biggest celebrities, including Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber and Aaron Tveit. Users shared content across all major social platforms, visited the campaign site, and navigated directly from landings to ticket purchases. Throughout the three-week Show Globe media placement, 90% of consumers who clicked on the ad unit engaged with the experience, and the push inspired 22% to share the experience, driving ticket purchases.

Best Media Agency Pivot

Hearts & Science + HBO Max



Background

HBO's 'Winning Time' sounded like an easy slam dunk. But a wide-ranging ad campaign provided a crucial assist to draw viewers to the series tracing the rise of the LA Lakers and the legendary run of superstar players like Magic Johnson and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar in the 1980s. The cable network's agency, Hearts & Science, launched the marketing ahead of 'Winning Time's' March 2022 debut off the court at LA's SoFi Stadium during Super Bowl LVI. Fate favored the media plan, as the hometown Rams defeated the Cincinnati Bengals, driving home the show's title and theme.

Insights

The city itself was the campaign's star. Hearts & Science ran a 30-second spot at the two-minute warning of the fourth quarter just before the Rams scored the winning touchdown. It was a high point of high engagement. The commercial attracted 101.4 million impressions across TV and online video, breaking past the average audience mark of 99 million impressions. Overall, the entire campaign across all media channels drove 766 million impressions. That playbook led 900,000 live TV viewers for 'Winning Time's' opening night, making it one of the most-watched linear premieres of a new HBO Series since 2020.



Best Multi-Channel Experience



Rufus + Initiative

Background

The streaming video-on-demand (SVOD) landscape became exponentially more competitive in 2022. That was the environment for Amazon Prime Video's boundary-defying superhero series, 'The Boys,' as the show's third season approached. In a media buy devised by Rufus with Initiative, the agencies sought to win over existing fans while attracting new ones. They created an appropriately/inappropriately titled campaign, 'Not Safe For Work (NSFW),' which played on dramatic moments and a bit of shock value in cities worldwide.

Insights

From laser beams shooting out from billboards in Australia and Mexico to a Brazilian metaverse, Rufus and Initiative threw a wild party in Las Vegas inspired by the show's superhero-orgy, the "Herogasm," complete with 3D-printed dildos and immersive rooms. The outrageous ad placements drove season three of 'The Boys' to Prime Video's number-one series spot. Worldwide viewership rose 17% from season two and 234% from season one, smashing Prime Video's goal and breaking free of industry trends.



Best Traditional Media Campaign

Hearts & Science + OLAY + Ebony



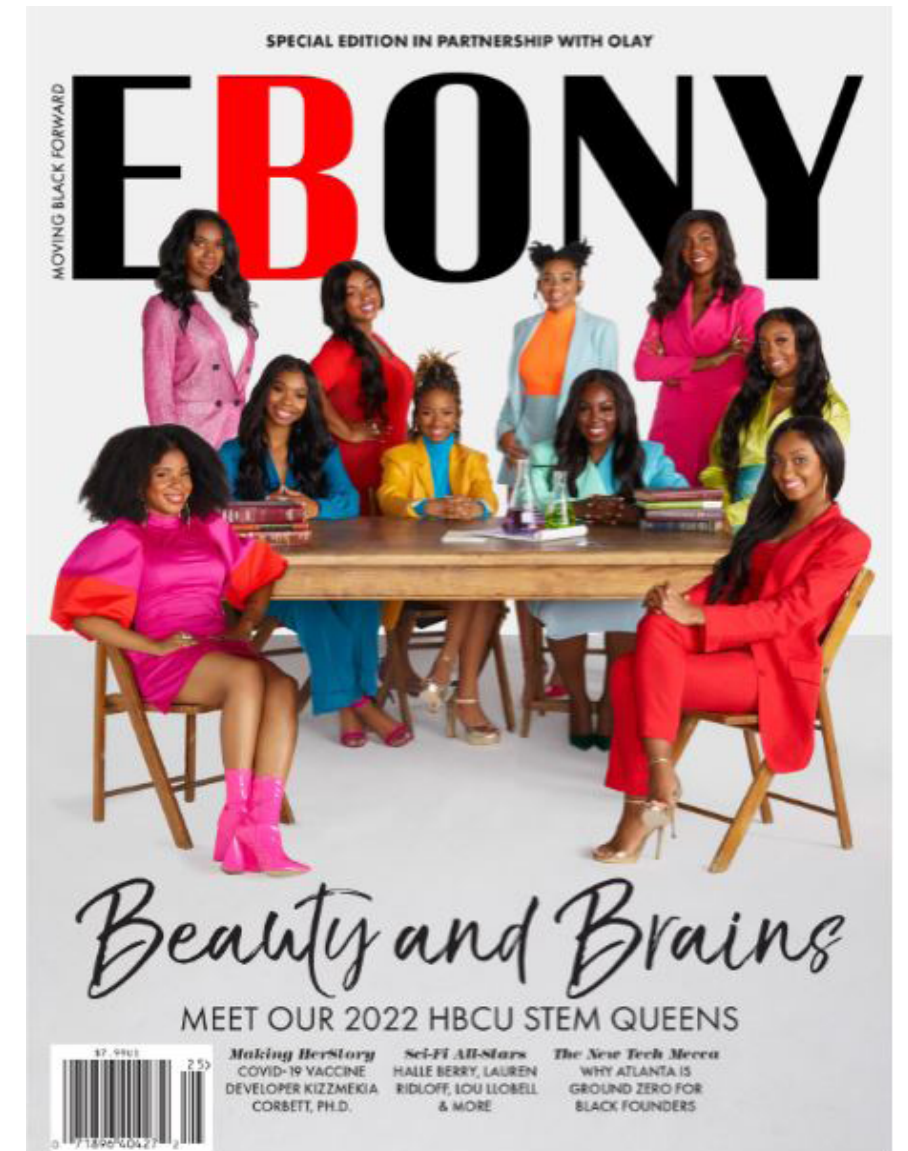
Hearts & Science

Background

Skincare marketer OLAY saw the beauty of science and math in a campaign with the Black-women-focused publication Ebony. In addition to leveraging the brand's profile as a leading cosmetics marketer, the goal was to promote more women pursuing dream careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). The collaboration also revitalized Ebony, which had gone out of print three years before the campaign.

Insights

OLAY collaborated with Ebony and historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) on a competition to find accomplished STEM college students. The first-ever HBCU STEM Queens contest awarded 10 winners \$10,000 each to pursue their ambitions further. A photoshoot of the HBCU "STEM Queens" served as the cover for a commemorative print issue – Ebony's first since 2019. The competition ultimately reached 8 million people across Ebony's website, 7 million on social and 9 million on email – not to mention the impact on the careers created due to the promotion.



Best use of Data | Spectrum Reach



Background

Supply chain issues created pressure on automotive in 2022, and showrooms like Texas' Roger Beasley Hyundai Dealership were on the front lines. Media effectiveness was more crucial than ever. In response, DR Advertising (formerly Danny Reed Advertising) and its frequent media buying and planning partner, Charter Communications' Spectrum Reach, took Beasley Hyundai's challenge as a chance to build brand awareness for the dealer's two Austin and San Antonio outlets. The campaign played to Spectrum's strengths in matching (privacy-compliant) household registration analytics to aggregated first-party audience data based set-top box and streaming/Video-on-Demand viewing.

Insights

The multi-screen campaign's audience-based buying strategy drove three times the number of visits to Roger Beasley Hyundai's website in Austin versus San Antonio. The Austin Response Rate was also 57% higher, which confirmed that the Austin campaign delivered a more concentrated audience that acted upon the message. Beyond that, Spectrum Reach proved it could cover the whole market by dint of its cable and internet subscribers on linear and streaming TV – and at a 10% lower CPM, representing genuine cost savings when the client needed it.



Best Use of Emerging Media

Levi's + Anzu



Background

Being an iconic fashion brand isn't enough to be top of mind for consumers, especially younger ones. As the first and longest-lasting jeans brand, Levi Strauss & Co.'s marketing strategy has kept a pants leg in the past and another in the future. In combination with ad tech platform The Trade Desk, media buying agency giant OMD and in-game ad provider Anzu.io, Levi's crafted an in-game global, 10-week campaign across a list of mobile, PC and metaverse games from Anzu's vast inventory.

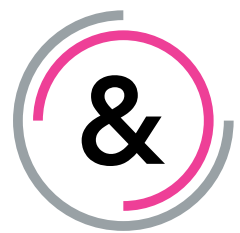
Insights

In-game advertising has altered the sense of brand discovery and customer conversion. With that understanding set, Levi's ads reached over 1.6 million unique users, resulting in an 8% jump in brand awareness and a 6% increase in brand consideration amongst target audiences. Fashion fans showed an 8% increase in ad recall (5% overall), with premium jeans purchasers rising to 16%. Almost two-thirds of gamers exposed to the campaign took some follow-up action, including visiting Levi's website or purchasing.



Best Use of Technology

Hearts & Science + AT&T Fiber



Hearts & Science

Background

The metaverse concept of virtual worlds has had some marketers scratching their heads about how – and whether – to dive into it. Although just 14% of U.S. adults are familiar with the metaverse, AT&T wanted to be viewed as driving and shaping the emerging technologies powering the metaverse. The telecom brand and its agency, Hearts & Science, particularly wanted to speak to the broad gaming audience to express the product attributes of its lightning-fast Fiber internet access service and its impact on the future of human connectivity.

Insights

Hearts & Science knew it needed to focus AT&T's message on educating its audience on the metaverse. The branded content campaign leveraged insights from Condé Nast's WIRED Brand Lab insights to create a custom three-episode documentary charting the history of the concept. The 'Into the Metaverse' video campaign drew a viewership audience of 589,000, over-delivering by 61%. Ultimately, the video series garnered 8.7 million impressions, with audiences spending 8% longer with the accompanying native branded article. The campaign drove a 22% lift in unaided awareness when consumers thought of fiber optic internet providers and deepened brand favorability by 17%.

AT&T fiber x

INTO THE

11/1/21 - 12/31/21

Media Agency of the Year

Movers+Shakers

MOVERS + SHAKERS

Profile

Movers+Shakers is an agency with an unusual mission: to spread joy by “bringing brands into tomorrow.” At a time of high anxiety about the future, Movers+Shakers’ ethos had its greatest test. With over 250 billion views on its TikTok campaigns, the agency has established a commanding foundation in social media. Movers-Shakers has been labeled “TikTok whisperers” and is regarded as one of the best agencies in the world at creating campaigns on that social network.

Impact

The agency’s campaigns earned over 10 billion media impressions in 2022, inspiring over a quarter trillion views across social media. Brands have noticed. Movers+Shakers’ client portfolio has grown dramatically, including partnerships with Amazon, Netflix, Red Bull, Target, Johnson & Johnson, Unilever, Warner, Hasbro, Robinhood and many others. Those roster additions prompted a 61% rise in new hires at the agency in 2022. In just over two years, the team catapulted from just the two co-founders to over one hundred employees, with no signs of slowing down – clearly, more joy is in store for Movers+Shakers and its clients.



Media Plan of the Year

Rufus + Initiative



Background

Using shock value as part of a media campaign can be akin to playing with fire. But in deft hands, shock value can be a powerful tool. Such was the case with Amazon Prime Video's racy promotion of the third season of its irreverent superhero series, 'The Boys.' Its agency partners, Rufus and Initiative, delivered the aptly titled global campaign, 'Not Safe For Work (NSFW),' to international audiences in an effort that perfectly aligned a message with the art of the Prime Video show.

Insights

Prime Video needed to do more to stand out in an increasingly crowded subscription-based streaming video space. 'The Boys' was the programming to do it – the hard part was drawing more attention as the show's third season approached. How could Rufus attract existing and returning viewers? The agency doubled down on the graphically edgy content that spoke directly to the program's fanbase with startling, R-rated intensity, complete with a superhero-orgy known as the "Herogasm," featuring 3D-printed dildos. Season three of 'The Boys' became Prime Video's top show and inspired viewing parties – and some unprintable activity – worldwide.





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