5 LESSONS FROM CANNES LIONS 2017
Introduction

As the dust settles on the 64th Cannes Lions Festival of Creativity, it’s time to reflect on the key trends and learnings that emerged from adland’s biggest gathering.

With a jam-packed agenda featuring some of the biggest names in our industry, alongside the latest tech start-ups and digital pioneers, it was a week of inspiration and insights.

Complementing the main festival programming, MediaCom set up base in the historic Martinez Hotel, hosting a specially-curated programme of intimate fireside chats and panel sessions.

These exclusive sessions added more context to the main themes heard elsewhere, and revealed intriguing new perspectives.

In this report, we share our summary of the key lessons, highlight the work that demonstrates their power and reveal the insights that will keep us thinking long into the future.
5 LESSONS FROM CANNES LIONS 2017

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Balance purpose with passion

Today, more than ever, consumers want to be associated with brands that share their beliefs. This isn’t a new phenomenon but purpose was a common watchword in the Palais. However, some brands are still not sure when and where to ‘take a stand’.

Getting brand purpose right means connecting with causes that your brand is truly passionate about and with which it has a natural connection. Trying to shoehorn your message into a debate about a completely unrelated issue, or leaning on a goodwill message to drive sales, will annoy consumers and expose your brand as insincere.

You should always approach your goodwill projects with honesty, and be genuine in what you are trying to achieve. Authenticity is vital. The brands that succeeded at Cannes were those that did good while staying true to their message.

One campaign that successfully married these values was MediaCom’s ‘Give the Rainbow’ for Skittles in the UK. In this campaign, Skittles removed the colours in its rainbow branding during Pride in London to show that Pride’s rainbow was the only one that truly mattered. The campaign won gold in the Outdoor Lions and Promo and Activation Lion competitions.

Another brand that got it right is Tecate beer in Mexico. In a country where two out of three women suffer domestic abuse, Tecate boldly challenged definitions of manliness with its ‘Gender Violence’ campaign, claiming that ‘if you are not a man who respects women, you are not one of us’. A gold winner in the Glass Lions, Tecate donated its Superbowl airtime budget towards raising awareness of domestic violence.

There’s no point in making content for content’s sake. How do you retain that authentic connection?

GERALDINE TUNNELL
SVP, CONSUMER AND SMALL BUSINESS MARKETING, DELL

What makes good storytelling? Honesty, truth and a willingness to be wrong.

REGGIE YATES
BROADCASTER, WRITER AND DIRECTOR
The most successful – and celebrated – campaigns are those that change attitudes and behaviours. This year, we saw a number of cause-related campaigns that did just that.

A 10-time Lion winner, ‘Evan’, for the Sandy Hook Promise Foundation is a prime example of purpose-driven storytelling at its best. An anti-gun violence PSA, the film is framed as an innocent, high school love story. But as the commercial reaches its conclusion, we see there was a second story happening all along – in the background of each scene. The film has been adopted as an education tool by schools, businesses and the US Department of Homeland Security.

Another worthy winner was ‘#Undress522’, by the ABAAD Resource Center for Gender Equality in Lebanon. The campaign used media to raise awareness of Article 522 of the Lebanese Code, which states that a rapist may be exonerated of his crime if he marries his victim. The campaign put pressure on the Lebanese government to change the law, and it did, just days later. The Tunisian government has also changed its legal framework, which was similar.

There’s never been a more important time to be aspirational; to tell a story and tell it from the heart...if we can unite brands with that purpose and come behind them, I think we could change the world, and save people’s lives.

SIR IAN MCKELLEN
ACTOR AND ACTIVIST
BREAKING GENDER BOUNDARIES

Gender is another hot topic brands need to address. As official Cannes statistics show, in 10 years of entries, men feature in campaigns four times more often than women; men speak seven times as often as women; women are 48% more likely to be shown in the kitchen, and men are 62% more likely to be depicted as smart.

Those statistics show we still have a long way to go before we reach true equality in brand communications. As Sheryl Sandberg, COO of Facebook, pointed out, brands should support this cause to help themselves. “Brands that are speaking in the language of gender equality have 8-10% more positive sentiment than brands who don’t,” she said.

The standout example this year was investment firm State Street’s ‘Fearless Girl’, a winner of 10 Lions, including four Grand Prix. The campaign was designed to promote the fact that companies with higher percentages of women in leadership roles outperform those that don’t.

On the eve of International Women’s Day 2017, State Street placed a statue of a girl on Wall Street opposite the famous Charging Bull. Despite her size, this Fearless Girl stood toe-to-toe with the ultimate symbol of corporate machismo, re-igniting the global conversation about equality.

“IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO JUST SAY 46% FEMALE, YOU HAVE TO LOOK AT THEIR INVOLVEMENT AT EACH TIER OF THE BUSINESS.”

CHRISTINE LAGARDE
MANAGING DIRECTOR
INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND

Female jury members in Cannes

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These trends are inexorably being shaped by Gen Z, who, as revealed in AdReaction: Engaging Gen X, Y and Z (a recent report by our sister WPP agency, Kantar Millward Brown), are informed and outspoken. They demand ads that allow them to co-create or shape what happens and are more positive towards brands that let them vote for something to happen (31% vs. 25% for Gen Y according to AdReaction). What’s more, they are more inclined to choose an option (28% vs. 25%) and make decisions (27% vs. 22%).

Canal+’s ‘AiMEN’, a Gold Lion winner, is a great example of how brands can talk with Gen Z-ers, not at them. To promote The Young Pope, CANAL+ took to social, building a bot to reply to users whose messages were contrary to the morals of the show’s titular character. The bot responded to more than 1m comments in real time with verses from the Bible. The campaign helped CANAL+ achieve its highest audience share in 2016.

Another campaign that progressed one-to-one real-time conversation was Marriott’s ‘M Live’, a Creative Lions winner. Recognising that travellers are more honest about their hotel experiences on social than in person, Marriott created a platform that tracks comments in real time, identifying opportunities for the hotel to start a two-way conversation.

_The best way to build an authentic audience is to open up a conversation with them. The first hour of posting a video is really important. If you spend an hour responding to comments, your video might start trending._

PIA MUEHLENBECK
SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCER

_Make experiences for [consumers] and they will naturally share them with people they know… [this approach] won’t interrupt them like traditional ads._

RAJA RAJAMANNAR
CHIEF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER AND PRESIDENT, HEALTHCARE BUSINESS, MASTERCARD
Focus on immersive experiences

As consumers demand increasingly immersive and engaging digital experiences, brands need to innovate fast or risk losing out. As Chris Duffey, Senior Strategic Development Manager at Creative Cloud Adobe, revealed, 71% of consumers would choose a brand because of a good digital experience. Brands that embraced this message were richly rewarded by the awards jurors in the Palais.

Pencil manufacturer Faber-Castell struck gold in the Mobile Lions with its innovative ‘Never-Ending Forest App’ which uses augmented reality to transform its pencils into animals when kids point their camera at them. The app also lets kids take pictures with the animals they unlock, to collect them, get information about the animals, and colour and customise their own versions.

The ‘Official Gorillaz App’ offers another kind of immersive, digital experience, blending augmented reality, virtual reality and 360 environments. The highlight brought the Gorillaz – a purely digital band – into the real world. The #HumanzHouseParty gave users a chance to preview the band’s new album at the largest-ever geo-specific AR listening event across 500+ locations.

Mobile’s not going to go away; it’s going to become more rich and interactive. There’s nothing more tangible than the real world. With AR/mixed reality we’re going to see more in that space, rather than a passive viewing experience.

JONNY SABBATH
GLOBAL DIRECTOR, ENTERTAINMENT, ANHEUSER-BUSCH INBEV
Get creative with data but stay ethical

Data is the new power tool for brands. Not only does it help us increase the effectiveness of our messages – by reaching the right audiences, in the right places, and at the right times – it provides us with the insights and tools to create inspiring creative campaigns.

There’s no doubt that data can transform the performance of digital advertising, but can it really help create fame for brands? MediaCom Australia managed to pull this off by using data to change the price of Snickers in key stores, based on the sense of rage that was coming from Twitter and social media.

Leveraging the brand positioning that “you’re not you when you’re hungry”, the wilder the internet got, the lower the price dropped and the more people spoke about it – all thanks to a complex algorithm known as a Hungerithm. The campaign won a total of 21 Lions, including six golds.

Just because data exists, however, doesn’t mean we should become slaves to this new tool. As Karen Blackett, MediaCom’s UK Chairwoman and a judge on the Titanium and Integrated jury, noted: “Data should not simply be a way to do cleverer but seemingly useless stuff. Data should be used to unlock those game-changing consumer insights that will allow us to do things at scale and fast.”

“2.5bn gigabytes of data are generated every day. Four fifths of which is unstructured.

CHRIS TUNG
CMO, ALIBABA
USING DATA IN THE REAL WORLD

Data doesn’t just help online campaigns, however. Some brands are using it to transform behaviours in the real world, too. Nike’s ‘Unlimited Stadium’, a 10-time Lion winner, is a great example of how to turn data into something more tangible.

In this campaign, Nike built the world’s most innovative training environment: a full-size LED running track. It takes runner’s data (lap time, speed, lap count, etc.) and turns it into a digital avatar displayed onscreen that you can actually run against, and train with.

Suncorp’s ‘AAMI SmartPlates’, a gold Creative Data Lions winner, is another example of how data can benefit consumers. AAMI SmartPlates is a real-time drive tracker and coach that sits at the centre of a new digital learning ecosystem: connecting young drivers, parents, instructors and road authorities for the first time. At its core is a mobile app, which tracks every detail of every drive, so learners can focus on the road while recording everything they do in real time.

“Data can help us move from the ‘I think’ to ‘I know’.

SUE UNERMAN
CHIEF TRANSFORMATION OFFICER, MEDIACOM UK
DATA FOR GOOD

‘Sea Hero Quest’, a two-time Media Lions winner in 2017 (and a big winner in 2016, too), demonstrated how brands can use data to affect positive change.

For this campaign, Deutsche Telekom, together with its partner agencies, created a mobile game designed to help dementia scientists understand more about the workings of the brain. If 100,000 people played Sea Hero Quest for just two minutes, the data collected could generate the equivalent of more than 50 years of lab-based research.

‘Reword’, by Australian charity Headspace, is another cause-related campaign which uses data to affect positive change in the real world. In a bid to solve cyberbullying, Headspace created a real-time alert system, powered by JavaScript, and integrated it into social messaging platforms.

Reword uses a custom lexicon database to identify strings of words that form millions of potential insult combinations. When a pattern is found, the child is alerted with a red strikethrough, instantly interrupting behaviour and prompting them to reconsider their words. Reword will soon be rolled out in every school nationwide.

“\nIf you feel good about a brand, you emotionally engage with it, then you’re going to transact with it.\nSTEVE STOUTE\nCEO, TRANSLATION\n“
Some ideas and behaviours are rooted much deeper than many brands realise, and to truly connect with consumers, it’s essential that brands understand them. This is a theme we explore in our latest BLINK magazine.

One Cannes winner which demonstrated a deep cultural understanding was ‘Payphone Bank’. Recognising that eight million Colombians do not have enough money to open full bank accounts, a phone provider, Tigo-Une, created an OS to turn its payphones into digital-era piggybanks.

To start saving, all a user had to do was access his account via a voice response system and deposit his change into the coin slot.

While data is crucial in helping us understand what consumers do online, culture is key to understanding how societies and consumers think and feel.
Understanding culture is crucial when moving into new markets. This year at Cannes, ‘China Day’ gave Western brands a chance to learn more about the world’s second-largest economy, hear the secrets of success from local companies succeeding in the west and get to know more about its unique culture.

China is increasingly recognised as a hotbed of innovation and tech talent, often leading the way in fields such as artificial intelligence and robotics – tech that plays an increasingly important role in advertising.

Putting AI to good use, internet giant Baidu used its cross-age facial recognition technology to help identify missing children years later. It took the technology one step further in ‘Know You Again’, a Silver Pharma Lions winner. In this campaign, Baidu partnered with Alzheimer’s Disease China to create a special pair of AI glasses that help Alzheimer’s sufferers recognise their loved ones.

Alibaba was also in town promoting the power of its data to help brands unlock this unique market. As well as owning China’s biggest shopping channel, Alibaba has assets encompassing video, and Weibo, China’s ultra-sophisticated version of Twitter, allowing it to create a Brand Databank that marketers can mine for insights to enhance their performance and brand campaigns.

[When moving into new markets], you’ve got to adapt to the new culture. Bridge the culture gap, co-create and be open to learning.

GLORY ZHANG
CMO, HUAWEI

AI will be the core force driving the evolution of marketing in the future. The focus of marketing will evolve from ‘Big Idea’ to ‘Big Data’, and from precision marketing to predictive marketing.

SY LAU
SENIOR EXECUTIVE VP OF TENCENT, CHAIRMAN OF TENCENT ADVERTISING, CHAIRMAN OF GROUP MARKETING AND GLOBAL BRANDING
Even if you didn’t make it to Cannes there are still ways to take advantage of the insights and lessons from this year’s event.

If you only do three things right now, think about the following:

01 **Get a grip on your data.** Data is the key to understanding your consumers better. It could be the driver behind your next big creative campaign.

02 **Create more immersive experiences for your consumers.** Today’s media and entertainment can be all-consuming and brands are competing with the very best – including Netflix and Amazon Prime – for attention. Working closely with your agency partners will enable you to find the best ways to make this deep connection.

03 **Understand the cultural and media ecosystem in which your target audiences operate.** Knowing where people will encounter your brand is critical to your success. So, develop a clearer view of the gaps in your system and then seek to fill them with campaigns that raise the bar for all your communications.

For more information, please get in touch.

blink@mediacom.com.
MediaCom wins at Cannes

This year, MediaCom won four Lions as lead entrant and 60 as the credited media agency – the best performance of any media network. In the Media category, our work on Deutsche Telekom’s ‘Sea Hero Quest’ campaign landed two Silvers, while our work on Skittles ‘Give The Rainbow’ in the UK picked up a Gold Outdoor Lion and a Bronze Design Lion.

As credited media agency, our Gold-winning work included ‘Hungerithm’ for Snickers in Australia, which won 21 Lions in total, and ‘Magenta Unleashed’ for Deutsche Telekom, which won four trophies, including a Gold Outdoor Lion.

MediaCom also led media for ‘Coins of Hope’, a campaign for the Belgian Center for Missing and Sexually Exploited Children, which landed five awards.

Another winner was ‘The Enter Sandbox VR Experience’ for Audi in Norway, a campaign which picked up five awards, including a Gold and two Silver Cyber Lions.

BLINK is MediaCom’s thought leadership programme, designed to help advertisers understand and leverage the latest global marketing trends, topics and insights. BLINK content includes an award-winning biannual magazine, a monthly newsletter and themed white papers/reports.

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