

CATEGORY CREATIVE REVIEW > SPORTING GOODS



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CREATIVE & STRATEGIC INTELLIGENCE FUELLING GAME-CHANGING SPORTS & SPONSORSHIP MARKETING

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**We deliver creative and strategic intelligence to fuel game-changing sports and sponsorship marketing.**

Inspire your teams with the world's most innovative sports brand campaigns, rights-holder marketing, sponsorship activations, tech & trends. **Contact@activative.co.uk**

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Welcome

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Activative's 'Creative Review' series offer a category/industry or sport/property specific creative and strategic intelligence to fuel game changing sports marketing and sponsorship activation.

These interactive reviews identify, explore and analyse the key strategies, tactics, themes and trends, as well as showcase best practice campaigns and award-winning creative from across the rights-holder, sponsor and sports brand landscape.

Our analytical creative reviews are interactive - just click on the play button arrows to view the illustrative, relevant creative.

Designed to offer insights for everything from pitches to competitive intelligence, our work helps clients stay ahead of the evolving landscape by broadening and deepening knowledge and learning from the world's best work.

We focus our analysis on the brave, innovative and original work that is driving, shaping and responding to the socio-cultural, economic and tech-led chang-

The logo for Activative, featuring the word "ACTIVATIVE" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The letters are widely spaced, and the 'A' and 'V' have a unique, angular design.

es across the sports marketing space.

We believe you'll find plenty of ideas, insights and inspiration to help fuel your game-changing sports and sponsorship marketing.

Our creative reviews are free to subscribers and available to non-subscribers for £500.

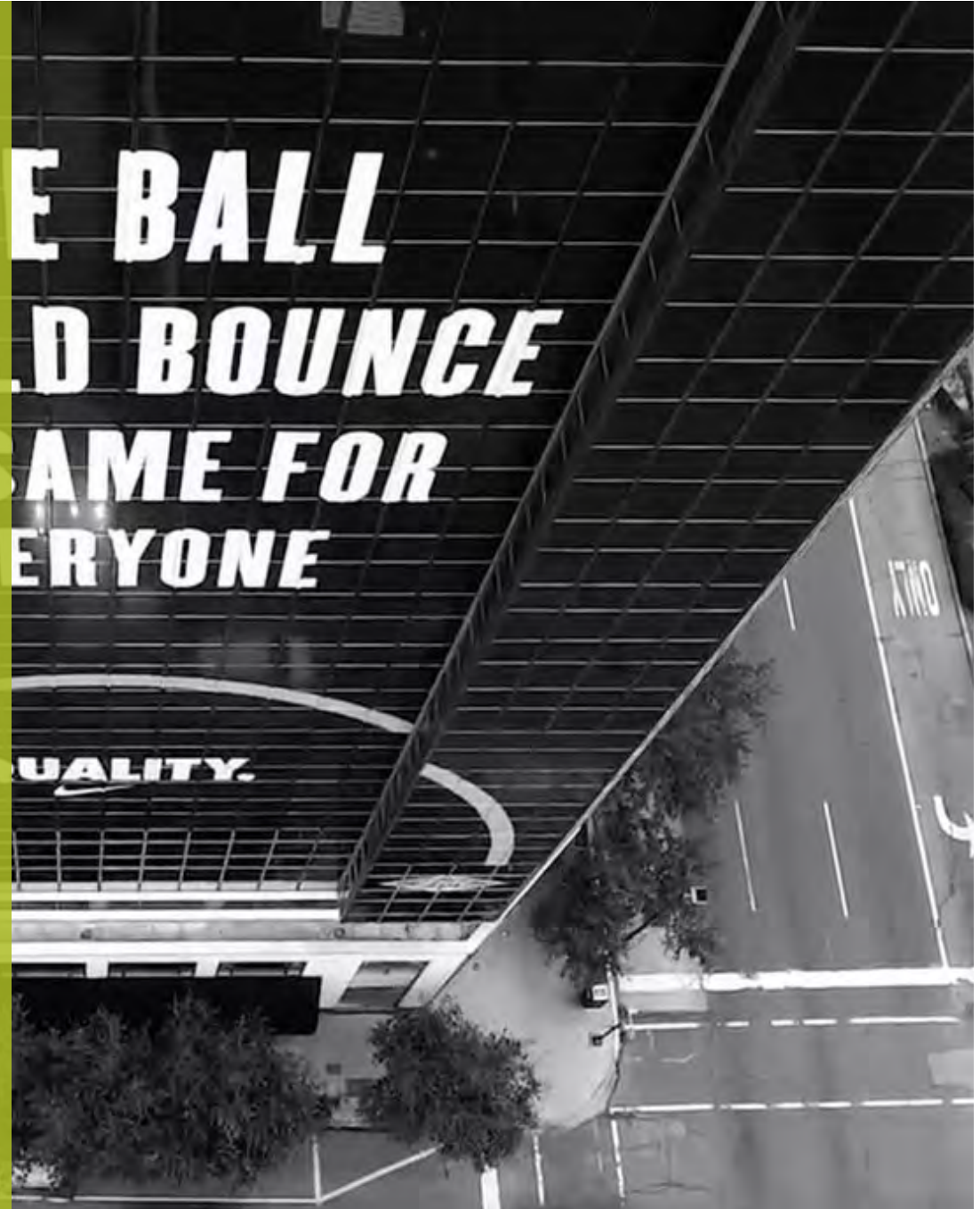
We would also be delighted to bring our briefings to life for your team or clients through a live, private briefing presentation for £1,000 (excluding travel & accommodation etc).

We also produce bespoke creative reviews from client briefs: to discuss commissioning a report just email [\*\*contact@activative.co.uk\*\*](mailto:contact@activative.co.uk)

Overview > Trends, Tactics & Tech

**THE BALL  
SHOULD BOUNCE  
THE SAME FOR  
EVERYONE**

**EQUALITY.**



## Introduction

**What a year it's been in the sporting goods space: a combination of smart strategy, fresh approaches to research, development and production and some brilliant marketing has seen category projections for turned on their head.**

August 2017's quarterly earnings show Adidas as the fastest riser, Nike growing slower and Under Armour reporting quarterly losses and historically low stock prices.

A marked difference from just a year ago when Under Armour, driven by its US success, overtook Adidas to take the sector's number two spot - causing some sector specialists to predict the Baltimore business would soon overtake Nike as the world's biggest sports brand.

In 2015 it was Under Armour cleaning up at Cannes Lions with its award-winning campaigns starring Misty Copeland and Gisele Bundchen and in 2016 Under Armour's omnichannel VP Sid Jatia confidently boasted to Marketing Week that: "Nobody wants to wear Nike anymore because it isn't cool - it's in the discount houses, it's everywhere. People like the underdog and engage with our story more."

But sales growth has slowed and by August 2017 shares dipped to their lowest level for four years and the company is undergoing personnel change and a corporate restructuring.

By July 2017, the market capitalisation of the three most high profile players in the space was:

- Nike > \$98.26bn
- Adidas > \$36.98bn
- Under Armour > \$6.9bn

This begs the question whether Under Armour has lost its clarity of purpose and/or lost some of its cool?

After all, it's hard to remain trendy with millennials when the founder Kevin Plank so publicly expresses support for Donald Trump.

In February, Plank publicly praised Trump on a US talk show, which led to negative reactions from its sponsored athletes and teams and a consumer backlash. The reaction to the founder's political affiliations eventually saw him step down from his position as president in June

and resign from Trump's American Manufacturing Council in August.

While Under Armour's momentum slips, Adidas is powering ahead of Plank's company with sales up 28% in China and 26% in North America.

Back in February 2015, Plank called Adidas his "dumbest competitor", but since then Adidas seems to have made a string of intelligent strategic decisions.

Like Nike, Adidas successfully stretches its appeal from retro and nostalgia, to future-tech and fashionable creativity: managing to blend a heritage of 'sports and sponsorship' equity, with fresh approaches to 'fitness', 'lifestyle fashion' and the 'secondary market'.

Adidas' recently revamped strategy shares similarities with the dominant twin drivers of Nike's success: sponsorship and the secondary market: sponsor aggressively in target categories and control/curtail supply for limited releases.

### Sponsorship

In the sponsorship space, Nike and Adidas have aimed to outspend rivals in specific categories which to some had seemed to be stagnating: for example Nike in basketball (where it leverages all levels of the sport from high school hoops and college ball, to pro-am leagues and a massive major reinvestment in the NBA) and Adidas in football/soccer (with a flood of new, extended and enhanced partnerships with clubs, leagues, and players).

The goal is to become as close as possible to being all-encompassing for fans - being the first brand to come to mind when consumers think of the sport.

The Adidas strategy refresh has also seen it reallocate extra investment into the lifestyle market where it has a first mover advantage of its rivals: with personal partnerships and influencer deals with the likes of Kanye West, Pharrell Williams, Snoop Dogg and Kendall Jenner (and many more) that help the brand reach far beyond its traditional core sports space

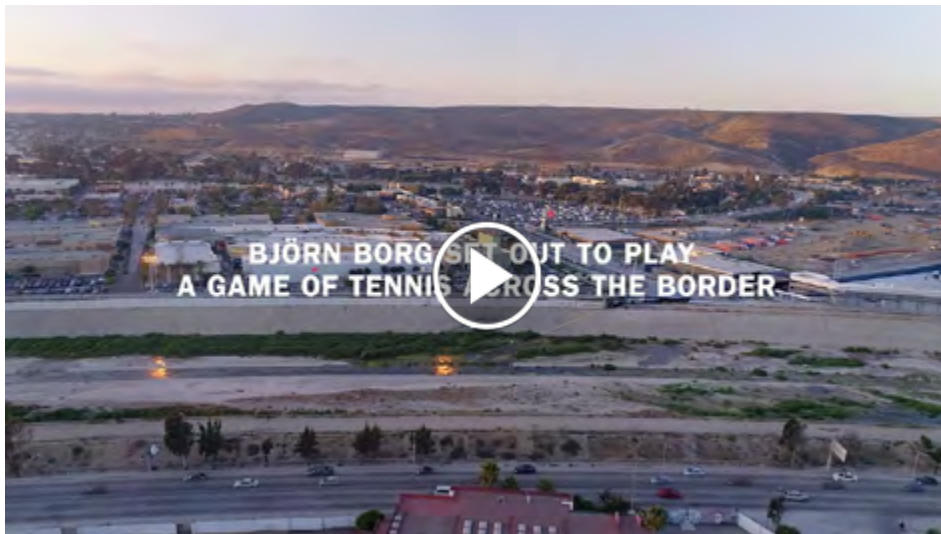
### Secondary Market

Adidas is also borrowing from Nike's strategy of nurturing and curating the burgeoning secondary market by creating sub-brand limited editions (eg Yeezy Boost, Superstars and NMDs), constricting supply and then provid-









ing platforms and promotion for consumers to increase prices as 'sneakerheads' resell on the secondary market.

While this strategy doesn't necessarily translate to direct revenues, it does help the brand remain cool and contemporary, drive brand premium and create spillover demand for other mass market products.

Sportswear brands are taking this approach a stretch further not just by innovating in the customisation and personalisation space (like Nike iD's VR Studio), but also through revolutionary research and development approaches that are making the production process part of the promotional campaign.

## Not Politics As Usual

**In these turbulent times, marketing, sport and sports marketing are all being part-fuelled by politics.**

Regardless of what some administrators, managers and owners say, sport (like art, literature, music....) is inextricably linked to politics.

From sports stars (think NFL quarterback Colin Kaepernick) and team owners (like Robert Kraft of the New England Patriots), to sponsor CEOs (remember Hawkers' David Moreno) and sportswear brand bosses (such as Under Armour's Kevin Plank and New Balance's Matt LeBretton), it is impossible to escape the current divided and divisive political era.

So it is not surprising that so much of the best work and award winning campaigns over the last year have focused on taking a brave, values-led, socio-cultural stand.

After all, sport is about achievement, human endeavour, people, teamwork, communities and culture.

And the best rights-holders, sponsors, broadcasters and sports brands know in the current political climate you must take a stand and demonstrate your beliefs and values with passion and purpose if you want your messages, content, products and services to connect, engage and enhance the fan experience.

So we salute all the admirable and award-winning sportswear marketing class of 2017 for taking a stand on

ageism, disability, ecology, gender, transgender, immigration, borders and unity.

### Fairness/Equality/Race/Immigration

A trend that accelerated after 84 & Lumber's controversial Super Bowl spot and rapidly spread to the sportswear sector as most of the big brands reinforced their values and commitment to fairness and equality across issues as diverse as race, ethnicity, immigration.

Nike, for example, promoted its universal commitment to 'Equality' with an initiative that not only included advertising and which actually encouraged people to take action and take part in programmes that take the fairness and respect from the sports field and translate them to all aspects of everyday community life.

The campaign, which followed on from its 'Black History Month' programme and launched during February's Grammy Awards telecast, was anchored by a new 90-second spot starring a set of star Nike athlete endorsers (including LeBron James, Serena Williams, Kevin Durant, Megan Rapinoe, Dalilah Muhammad, Gabby Douglas, and Victor Cruz) and included a voiceover by Michael Jordan and a soundtrack led by Sam Cooke's 'A Change Is Gonna Come' sung by Alicia Keys.

Online, the TV spot was supported by a 3-minute 30-second, behind-the-scenes online video which explores the making of the commercial and talks to Nike endorser athletes about what 'Equality' means to them with further digital and social amplification and asset support, plus OOH and press ads

Nike also let consumers to create their own 'Equality Avatar' with social media filters to express support.

All assets and executions drove consumers to the digital hub where the initiative's participatory strands live and where users are encouraged to support two of Nike's newly announced partner organisations: 'Mentor' (a national US mentoring partnership) and 'Peace Players International' (which uses sport to help young people unify divided communities).

The digital hub also pushes a new Nike 'Equality T-Shirt' to promote diversity and inclusion and expresses Nike's commitment to advancing those ideals.

Another, quite different, yet just as inventive example of this trend saw Swedish underwear and sportswear brand Björn Borg launch an integrated cross border

initiative spearheaded by holding a brand-owned 'Borg Open' tennis match by the banks of the Tijuana River on the US/Mexico border

This politically charged summer campaign, developed with Swedish creative agency Round & Round, aims to show how sport can unify rather than divide.

The initiative saw Mexican tennis star Mariano Argote play against Peter Clemente of the USA and, through voiceovers, reveal how both players have been instrumental in improving one another's game.

The campaign copy includes the lines: "The world of today is full of conflicts and rivalry that lead to frustration, causing people and nations to build walls between each other. But why building walls, when we could get to know and learn from one another instead? That's why we have established a tennis match on the U.S. – Mexican border".

'Borg Open' is an initiative to manifest an open world where sports have the power to unite people.

In keeping with the spirit of the initiative, the spot also came in a Spanish language version.

The brand, agency and production team put themselves at risk to create the film and the spot's audio even features a VO from legal counsel warning the director Klaus Thymann of potential arrest.

An endnote reveals that while US Customs and Border Patrol denied permission to film, they received numerous approvals from Mexican agencies for production.

After the actual game and the shoot, the sports brand used social media to try and engage Trump directly by tweeting the video along with a request to Donald Trump Jr for his email.

The initiative was further amplified across the brand's own social spaces with the hashtags #BorgOpen #TennisAcrossBorders: including Facebook, and with direct, political messages on Instagram too.

"Borg Open is our way to state that we, as a sportswear brand, believe in an open world," explains Björn Borg CEO Henrik Bunge.

"Unfortunately, it is not likely to make those people who promote raising walls change their opinion. But, with our heritage, we know that tennis and sport in general, has the power to unite people. We hope to inspire people to reach out to their neighbours and do sport together instead of building walls."

## Gender

All the major brands continued to increase spend and creative focus on supporting and empowering women through sport with many outstanding female-focused brand and range campaigns - such as Adidas 'Unleash Creativity', Asics 'Girls On The Run', Nike 'What Will They Think', Puma 'Do You', Reebok 'Perfect Never' and Under Armour's 'Unlike Any'.

This trend isn't limited to global brands in mature ad markets, but now regularly includes emotionally powerful, tactical campaigns in emerging markets too.

Stand-out examples of this latter trend over the last year include campaigns like Nike's 'Da Da Ding' in India and 'What Little Girls Are Made Of' in Russia.

'Da Da Ding', which aims to champion, inspire and support India's next generation of female sports stars, scooped gold (film – clothing, footwear and accessories) and bronze (film craft – music) at Cannes Lions 2017.

The sportswear giant's pre-Olympic, female-focused campaign certainly succeeded in going viral right across India as it inspired young women and up and coming female sports stars to break with the cultural norms, defy convention and define their own success.

The core film focuses on the themes of strength, discipline and confidence that sport can bring.

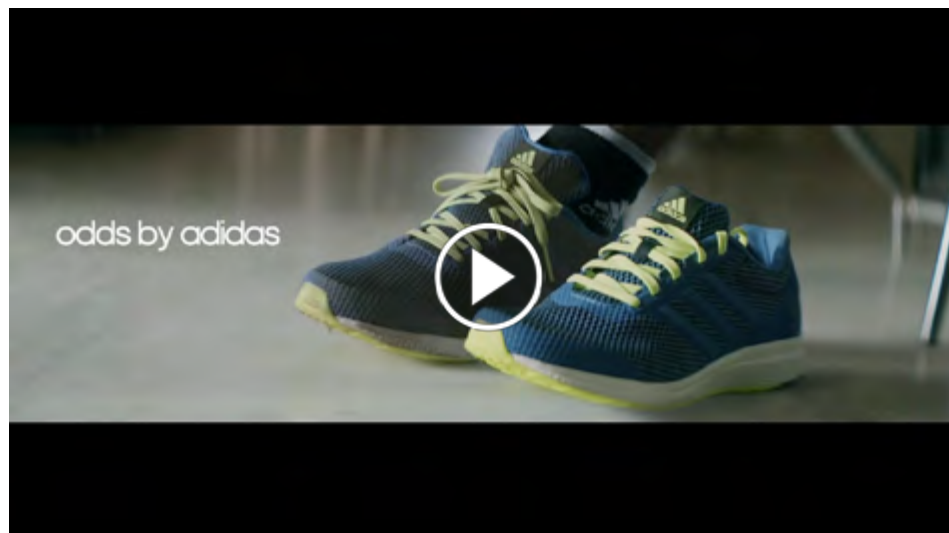
India is a country where cricket overshadows all sports and one in which athletics has traditionally been a male-dominated, minor affair. So Nike's objective is to inspire youngsters to take up track and field and to take a stand for girl power and put female athletes centre stage.

First posted on Nike India's YouTube channel on 10 July, the campaign's spearhead spot ends with the copy line 'It's time to lace up those shoes. It's time to go turbo!' and drives viewers to [www.Nike.com](http://www.Nike.com) and to #justdoit

The campaign features one of Bollywood's biggest stars Deepika Padukone (a former national-level badminton player), alongside leading and lesser known female athletes like hockey player Rani Rampal, footballers Jyoti Ann Burrett and Tanvie Hans, surfer Ishita Malaviya, athlete Shweta Hakke, and cricketers Harmanpreet Kaur, Smriti Mandana and Shubhlakshmi Sharma.

The spot went viral after Padukone posted it on her Facebook page with a personal note saying that sports was a great help to her two years ago when she was struggling with depression.





'I was sinking. I almost gave up. But the athlete in me that gave me the strength to fight and never ever give up!'

This is the first ever Nike campaign in India by the sportswear goliath's long-term agency Wieden+Kennedy - which won the brand's business in India 2015 after a competitive pitch.

The core spot, directed by France's Francois Rouselet, features a soundtrack campaign anthem by Gener8ion and the campaign also features US rapper Gizzle. It even comes with an official lyric video (which itself has notched up more than 13,000 views).

Women across the world are embracing sports and an active lifestyle like never before,' says Keerthana Ramakrishnan, Nike India communications head

Nike Russia's 'What Are Girls Made Of' ad, which won a film Gold Cannes Lion (in the clothing, footwear and accessories section), is another fine example of challenging traditional notions of 'what girls are made of' by offering a modern perspective on one of the country's most recognizable and loved children's songs.

Developed by Wieden+Kennedy Amsterdam, it puts a fresh, equality-loaded slant on the traditional Russian song that switches little girls being made of 'flowers', 'gossip' and 'marmalade' to a modern perspective more focused on 'toughness', 'determination' and 'strength'.

The creative itself sees a level of well-dressed, grown-up confusion rise in proportion to the diminutive young singer's rising confidence.

### Disability

Disability rights and campaigns celebrating para-athletics was another major feature of sportswear marketing through the last 18 months.

Much of this was spearheaded by work revolving around the 2016 Rio Paralympics: indeed, the most awarded campaign of all at Cannes Lions 2017 was the brilliant Channel 4 'We Are The Superhumans'.

Nike's global 'Unlimited' campaign also included notable strands linked to athletes with disabilities, while Adidas' 'Odds' also picked up numerous awards.

'Odds' is a same shoe, customised footwear initiative that supports para athletes and which aims to raise the profile of blade runners. Adidas and agency Taproot Dentsu, launched this unique footwear project focusing on the needs of para-athletes: 'Odds' is essentially a pair

of shoes for the same foot. It came from a simple agency insight: that many para-athletes/blade runners need a pair of shoes on the same side (two lefts or two rights) rather than the usual left/right pair.

'Odds' features the Adidas Mana Bounce shoe from its 2017 Fall Winter range and, depending upon the specific customer's need, athletes can either choose to buy a pair of shoes for the right foot or a pair of shoes for the left foot and the product is available for purchase via [www.shop.adidas.co.in](http://www.shop.adidas.co.in).

The marketing campaign is positioned an ode to all athletes in the world who 'choose to run against the odds'.

It is led by a set of inspiring films: one telling a specific story and the other a more generic spot.

The launch film is fronted by India's first blade runner Major DP Singh and is narrated by actor Kabir Bedi. It captures marathon runner Singh's life, his war heroism, his challenges and his passion for running.

Singh believes 'Losing a part of the body does not lead to disability. Losing the will to fight out odds, does. Celebrate odds and be the winner. If you wish to give up anything, give up giving up. That's the message I wish to give everyone. And that's the reason I run every day'.

This hero video rolled out in the first week of September as the Rio 2016 Paralympics got under way.

This was followed by a second spot on 15 September – more focused on the 'Odds' special edition shoes offering – with the shoes themselves narrating the creative.

'At Adidas we live by the principle, 'No Athlete Left Behind' and this philosophy is at the heart of Odds,' explains Adidas India marketing director Damyant Singh.

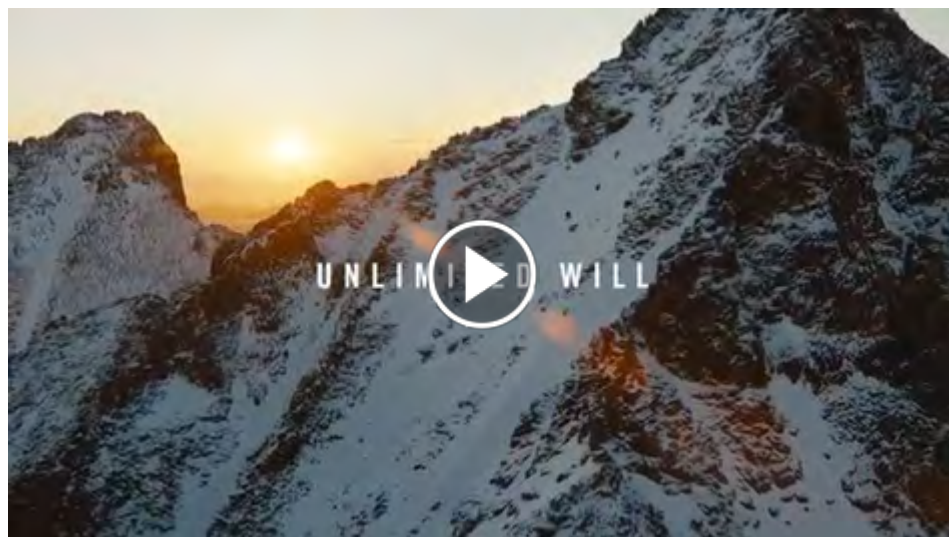
'It is our way of encouraging and cheering para-athletes on to achieving their best and we hope Major DP Singh's story inspires many more to live their dreams and prove that Sports has the power to change lives.'

In addition to using interest around the Paralympics in Rio to celebrate this courageous community, the objective of this initiative is to tell an inspiring story that will lead a change in consumer behaviour.

'I felt that a film on Major DP Singh's life, would definitely motivate common people to get into some form of sport or physical activity,' adds Santosh Padhi, Chief Creative Officer, Taproot Dentsu India.

'So our intention was to get this dual messaging through with this single campaign.'

'Celebrating impossibly glorious feats makes all of



us strive harder and look beyond our limitations. Such is the power of this story-telling', continues Taproot Dentsu CEO Umesh Shrikhande.

### Ecology/Environment

The environment is another emerging sporting goods sector marketing trend.

One truly stand-out 2017 sporting goods eco campaign was the Adidas 'Parley' project.

This campaign began at the end of 2016 when Adidas and its ocean conservation partner Parley leveraged its Bayern Munich and Real Madrid sponsorships to launch new eco-friendly Adidas x Parley football kits.

These globally famous jerseys and the club combined with Adidas and Parley to spearhead this new campaign addressing the environmental threats to the world's oceans.

The new home shirts, which were made from up-cycled marine plastic debris and which feature water-based environmental-friendly prints for the team crests and sponsor (T-Mobile and Fly Emirates) branding, come with shorts and socks and carry both the Adidas and Parley logos

Printed on the back neck tape of each jersey is the line: 'For the oceans'.

This phase spearheaded a wider ongoing collaboration with Parley for the Oceans which launched a new line of Adidas Ultra Boost footwear – a shoe created from recycled plastic found in oceans from around the world.

Adidas-Parley have a mission to create a minimum of one million pairs of the shoes by the end of 2017.

Both the shoes and jerseys were made with marine plastic waste recovered through Parley's interception and clean-up operations in coastal areas of the Maldives.

The initiative sees Adidas work with Parley to 'turn ocean plastic pollution into high performance sportswear, spinning the problem into a solution' and to generate awareness and get consumers to sign-up and commit to the cause at <http://www.adidas.com/parley> and via the hashtag #adidasParley.

The aim is described as 'the beginning of the end of ocean plastic' and as well as building awareness, driving sign-ups and support and generating revenue, but also to support and fund communication, education, research and development, direct action and eco innovation.

## Live, Low Latency & Real-Time Responsive

**The last 18 months have seen sporting goods brands refine and master the art of activating at live events in real-time and marketing around sport with low latency leverage campaigns that engage fan passion at its peak.**

### Under Armour 'Break The Game'

Scoping awards left, right and centre for real-time response, Under Armour's #BreakTheGame followed endorser Steph Curry's championship-winning, history-making, MVP season, in which he smashed his own three-point record and changed the way pro ball was played.

(The NBA's official 2K16 video game even raised video-game Curry's ratings for its 7 million weekly global players mid-season to reflect how he changed the sport).

The campaign also understood the way Americans were watching TV and sport was changing: as they surfed social second screens whilst watching television.

The idea was based on initial campaign research showing, unsurprisingly, that online Curry chat spiked while he was actually playing.

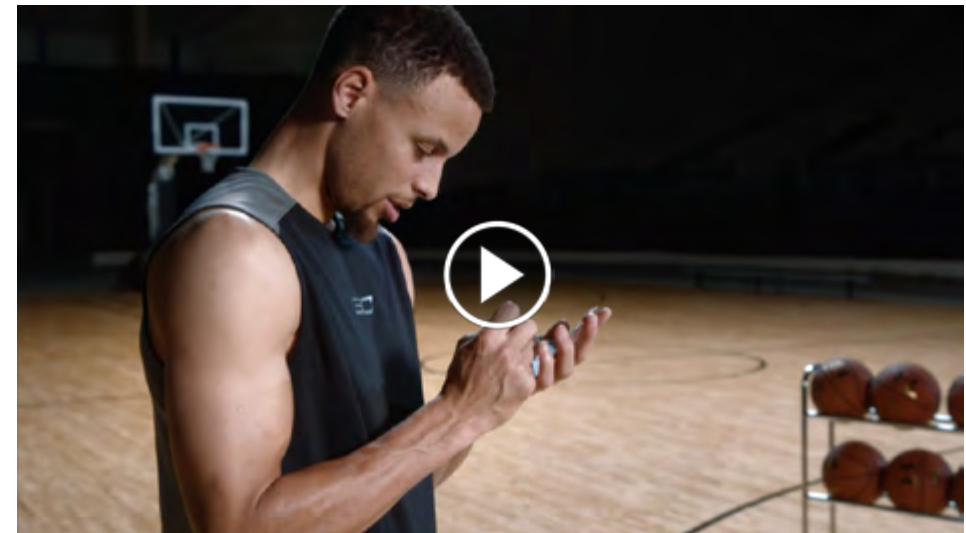
So Under Armour creative agency Droga5 turned each and every single Steph Curry three-pointer during his Golden State Warriors' 2016 playoffs run into its own Under Armour experience by tweeting a new three-second social clip (ad) the moment each shot drops.

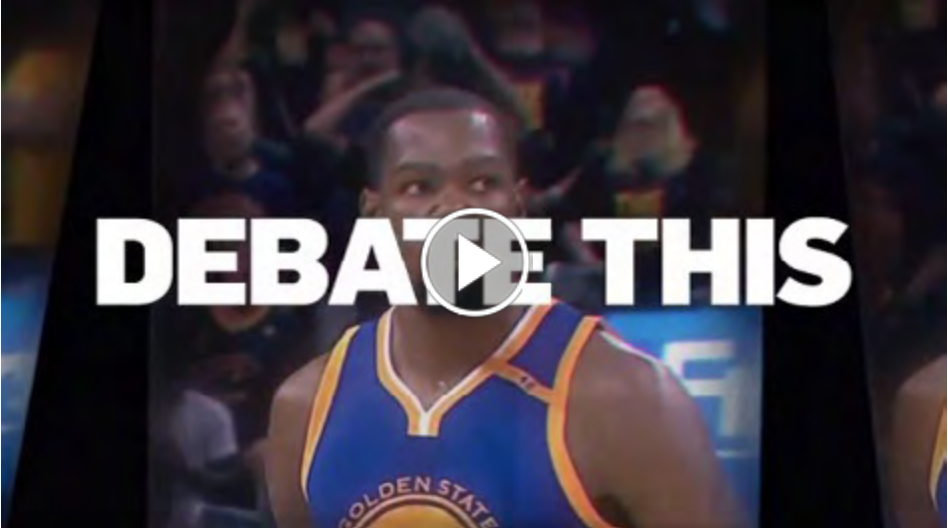
Thus creating a real-time, second-screen social experience complementing Curry's real-life performance.

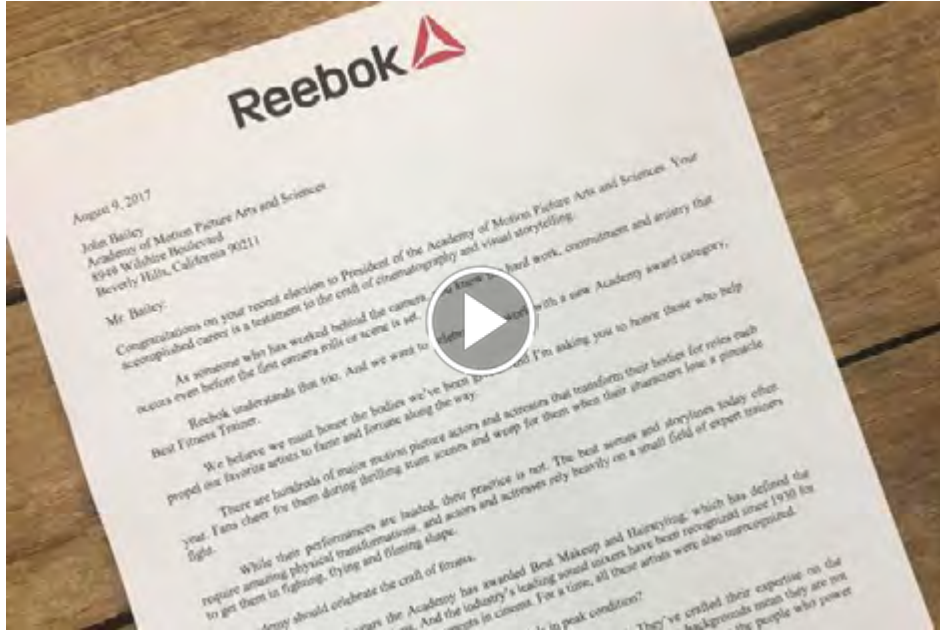
### Nike 'Celebration Campaigns'

For Nike, low latency marketing leveraging ambassador victories isn't simply about hoping influencer reach and athlete associations will indirectly benefit the brand, but its it also now increasingly about driving direct sales of victory-associated, limited edition product ranges.

Nike's marketing partnership playbook now regular-







ly features congratulatory campaigns for athlete ambassadors and/or sponsored teams to celebrate milestone victories and leverage consumer passion at its peak.

The tactic is built on pre-prepared content (rather than assets created on the fly) and the formula follows an established pattern: a spearhead spot (typically debuting in the first ad break following the event climax) is supported socially to celebrate a big win and promote a limited edition, property-relevant product range.

Three recent stand out case studies illustrating this strategy are last autumn's 'Goodbye Someday' (after the Chicago Cubs finally won the MLB World Series), Kevin Durant 'Debate This' (after his Golden State Warriors clinched the NBA title) and 'Ro8er' (which followed Roger Federer's record breaking eighth Wimbledon win).

### Reebok 'Responsive Social Media'

Recent months have seen Reebok adapt the tactic of using low latency, event-response social media marketing to place the brand closer to the core of consumers' broader cultural conversation.

The approach is fairly straightforward: the brand piggy-backs a news story or current event with a low latency social comment or piece of digital content in order to drive some short term Reebok related PR and digital engagement.

There have been several stand out summer examples of this new tactic.

For example, in mid July Reebok tweeted a flow chart response criticising Trump's misogynistic comments, generating 53,000 retweets and 90,000 likes from a single Twitter post.

While later in July the brand joined the space race and tried to shoot for the social stars by releasing digital images of its in-development astronaut boot - generating plenty of interest around cyberspace.

In August, Reebok President Matt O'Toole used social media to make a request to the new American Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences President John Bailey for a 'Fitness' Oscar in a low latency social stunt responding to the news of Bailey's new appointment.

This plea to the movie organisation to recognise the craft carried out by one hard-working community that remains under-appreciated in Hollywood – fitness trainers came in the form of a tweeted letter.

## R&D Revolution; Production = Promotion

**For several years sportswear brands have been offering various forms of consumer customisation and personalisation, but the last 18 months has seen a real focus on placing specific customer segments at the heart of the research, development and production process and then using this as the core of the promotional approach.**

### Nike iD'VR Studio'

2016 and 2017 were both billed as 'The Year Of Virtual Reality' - especially in the world of sports sponsorship and sportsbiz marketing.

Yet NikeiD's VR Studio, developed with R/GA Buenos Aires, was one of the few VR led initiatives to be awarded at Cannes 2017.

This campaign actually won a Silver Lion for digital craft in the new VR section.

Back in 1999 when NIKEiD was first created, it was a revolution: the very first digital trainer customisation experience and service. 17 years later Nike was still at the tech cutting edge by using VR to rework how consumers interact with the platform beyond the NIKEiD website.

As with so many personalisation projects and customisable campaigns, the objective is simple, but the technology is complex.

We're not going to try and explain the coding and tech behind this initiative - so we are going to keep it short, sweet and simple ourselves.

NIKEiD VR Studio is a virtual reality experience that brings personalisation to life in an innovative, intimate, and otherworldly way.

Each user creates their own personal trainers in a shop by choosing colours from animated palettes of fabrics, laces, soles, and even logo swooshes.

Once done, they are sent an email where they can view their creation and access nike.com to buy it.

### Adidas 'Glitch'

Another notable illustration of this emerging trend is Glitch: an initiative that directly set out to disrupt the norm and which saw Adidas and agency Possible win a Silver Lion (in media - for use of co-creation and user generated content) and a Bronze Lion (in digital craft - for user experience design).

As Adidas itself said: 'Forget everything you know about the process of launching a product. Your standard football boot launch has been rolled out a million times. For Glitch, we broke that pattern.'

This is an initiative driven by consumer participation from the very start. Its origins stretch back to Autumn 2015 when the brand and agency brought together a group of London children.

But what is Glitch?

It is football boot can only be purchased through the product exclusive app: which is unlocked by community invite codes – a 'revolutionary approach'.

Consumers are then able to order a 'starter pack' (which is essentially a one-off, three-product offering) which is sent to them within just four hours (for those involved in the London area).

Thus enabling the new owner to play in the boots the same day.

Once a consumer has a code, they can create a bespoke boot by choosing a combination of an inner shoe with an outer skin.

Glitch is marketed as 'the world's first interchangeable boot': the inner shoe offers a 'snug fit and enhanced comfort' and the laceless outer skin 'perfect ball control'.

The sales process comes with a personal fitting and trial session. When bought before 5pm the boots will be hand-delivered to a location of the customer's choice within four hours, if the customer lives in London.

Plus, if they aren't convinced of the benefits, style and results, they can return them within two weeks and get a full refund – even if even if they worn and used them.

The project's origins date back to Autumn 2015 when brand and agency brought together a group of children in London

The kids (Adidas consumers and fans - or course) gathered for what the sportswear giant called 'conceptual workshops'.

Then, in the following months, the team worked

closely with these kids 'to evolve and refine' what eventually became 'Glitch'.

Brands, consumers and fans were encouraged to influence each and every aspect of the initiative: not only coming up with the product concept, name itself, but also the 'design' and 'service proposition' (even including the app).

By the time Spring 2016 came around, the kids team had begun wearing and testing the prototype footwear and feeding back on the project.

This is a major contrast to the regular product and service development process established throughout the industry – new concepts are typically not just developed in-house with individually chosen partners), but they are also kept under wraps away from consumers and prying eyes..

The developer and test group of youngster stayed closely involved right through: with periodical CVS (Consumer Validation Sessions) being hosted agency Iris' offices.

For the community pre-launch phase, the team linked up with London players (not the usual pro footballers and athlete endorsers) to create the campaign content.

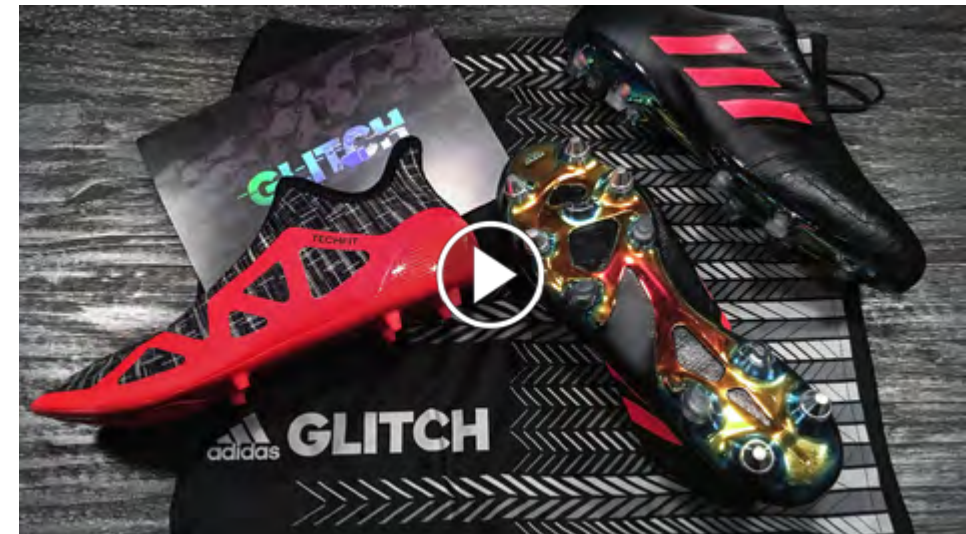
Thus, Glitch is a start-to-finish consumer collaboration: which adidas says is completely transforming its approach to launching a new product.

Other input at the launch phase came from YouTubers and Chelsea's Ruben Loftus Cheek, while The F2 Freestylers also helped develop and launch Glitch by promoting the boots amount their seven million-strong subscribers on YouTube.

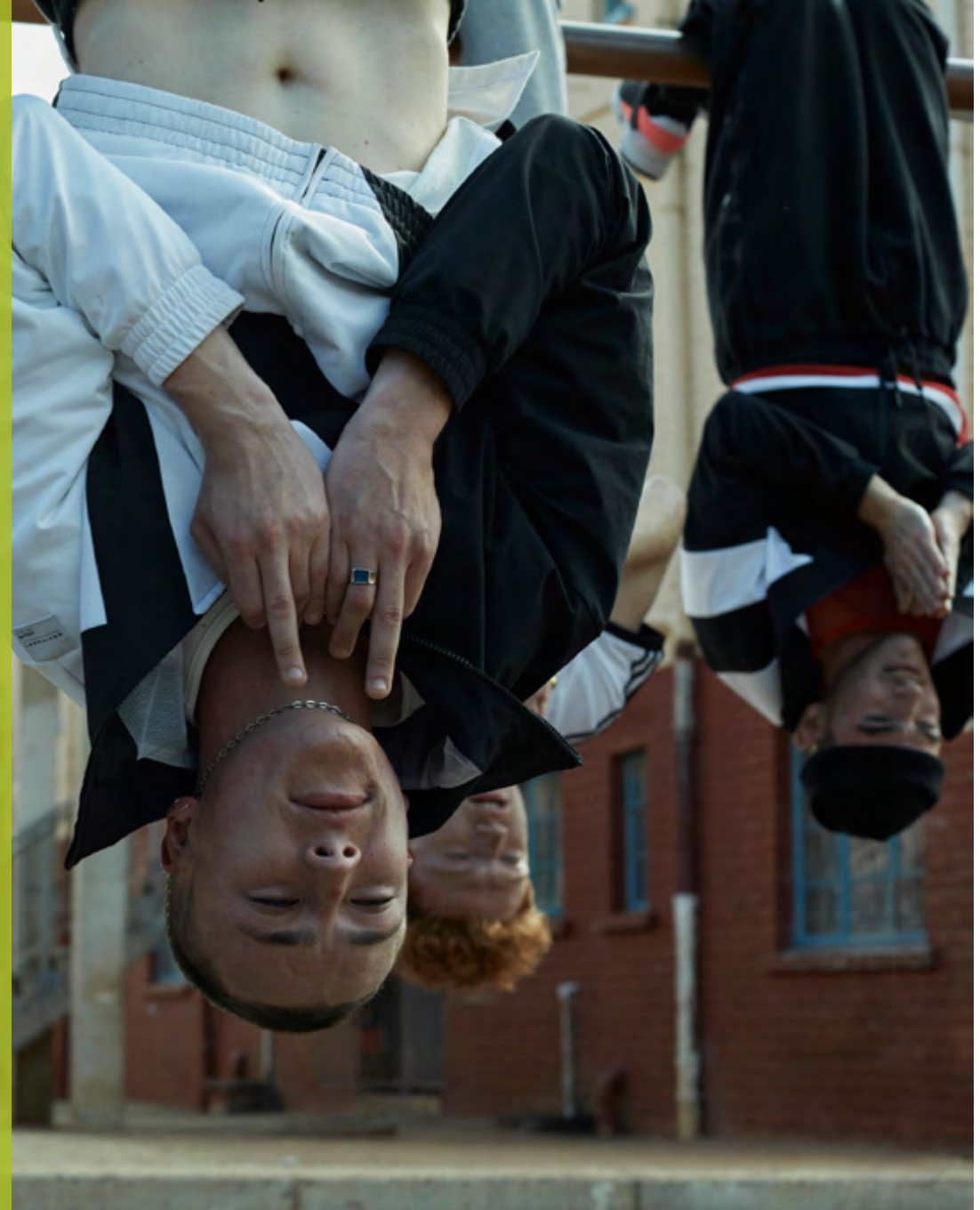
Florian Alt, senior director of global brand communications at Adidas, said: "On-demand culture was one of the starting points when we started developing the Glitch concept.

"When we look at consumers now, kids are dictated to in when they're buying new products by when brands drop their product lines. We thought, 'How cool would it be to come with an approach where the kid is in control of when he wants to purchase shoes, and which shoes?'"

Adidas Football general manager Markus Baumann adds: "Glitch is not only a market leading innovation, it's also a chance for us to challenge, change, and break the existing pattern in the football boot business."



## Best Practice Case Studies







*'Original Is Never Finished'*  
**Adidas Originals**  
Johannes Leonardo

Adidas Originals triumphed at Cannes with an Entertainment for Music Grand Prix (and several other awards for integrated, film craft design/art direction and adapted music) for its global 'Original Is Never Finished' campaign: a complicated, cleverly orchestrated campaign with 'music at its heart' and with the idea that 'being original is never finished' as its mantra. It was in January 2017 that Adidas Originals and agency Johannes Leonardo first rolled out the debut spot focusing on originality and creativity and a provocative approach to contemporary streetwear culture to relaunch the brand's EQT footwear line.



**This global initiative was spearheaded by a sexy and stylish 90-second opening film set to the re-mixed Frank Sinatra classic ‘My Way’ and featuring a blend of contemporary creators (and brand endorsers) from sport, music and art.**

The first spot was fronted by musicians Snoop Dogg and Stormzy, plus artist Petra Collins, while skate legend Gonz appeared with French professional skater Lucas Puig in ‘Lucas & The Gonz’.

Legendary basketball icon Kareem Abdul-Jabbar passed the torch to a future star in the form of young LA Lakers star Brandon Ingram in the ‘Raining Basketballs’ segment, while musician Dev Hynes offers a nod to the past in his choreographed ‘Mirrors’ sequence.

The commercial - created by New York agency Johannes Leonardo, directed by Terence Neale via RSA and boosted by social video outfit Unruly - blends art school creativity with the eccentric and dystopian future of a Mad Max style rebellion.

The video’s arresting images range from sportswear-clad teens hanging like bats from a pole to masked kids with flaming torches.

This launch spot showcased what it describes as ‘assorted Easter Eggs’ such as artist Petra Collins’ re-imagining of Botticelli’s famous ‘Birth of Venus’ painting, an homage to Kubrick’s A Clockwork Orange and Snoop Dogg’s own retake on his “Doggystyle” album cover.

Launched on 18 January, it aims to explore the idea that driving culture forward can recreate the idea of what is truly original.

First posted on the brand’s YouTube channel, it was amplified across all the usual digital and social channels like Instagram, Facebook and Twitter.

‘Everything we do for Adidas Originals is a work in progress, as true creativity is never finished. We have in the past challenged ‘outward’-facing concepts like what it meant to be a superstar, or the dystopian notion of the future,’ explains Adidas Originals VP of global communications Alegria O’Hare.

‘For the first time, we decided to challenge the very ethos of our brand and the notion of what it means to be a true original.’

‘We wanted the film to reflect the rich past of

all creative spheres: music, art, film and sport,’ adds Johannes Leonardo creative director Wes Phelan who notes that the past empowers the future.

‘Starting with the music, we intentionally chose a track that had been done multiple times before to prove our point — original is never finished.’

It aims to redefine EQT footwear, a celebrated 1990s line, for a new generation.

This first film is actually a hero launch spot for a campaign that ran right through 2017.

It was followed up in April with a second spot featuring an all-female cast,

By August the brand has rolled out the third iteration of Adidas Originals’ award winning ‘Original Is Never Finished’ series with a new line up of star endorsers drawn from across the sport, music and fashion fraternities to front the brand’s ongoing, evolving dystopian saga.

From the world of sports comes hoops star James Harden, from the music diaspora are Playboi Carti, 21 Savage and Young Thug, while from the celebrity influencer circuit comes Kendall Jenner and creative agency Johannes Leonardo brings them together for a third instalment of its ongoing intense and colourful 2017 Originals commercial series.

What do they all have in common?

Well, Adidas believes they are all up-and-coming stars whose creativity and individuality helps them stand out in a cluttered influencer landscape.

Fresh, rich, opulent, challenging, gritty and even a touch aggressive, the latest ad is again set to a remix of Frank Sinatra’s classic ‘My Way’, the ad is helmed by the director of the previous two spots Terence Neale of RSA Films.

The objective of the latest film, which launched on 10 August and is being amplified across all the brand’s digital and social platforms from YouTube, Twitter and Instagram, is the same as its predecessors – to reflect the brand’s design philosophy of of constant reinterpretation.

August’s third ad features some of the images already familiar in the series (such as Botticelli’s ‘Birth of Venus’), but this time sees Jenner emerge from a reworked image that looks as much like an Alien-style sleep chamber as a work by the early





Renaissance Italian painter.

“Adidas Originals always wants to stay true to the ethos of endless creativity, and it is important to stay centric to our DNA in that a real original, and authentic creativity, is always a work in progress,” explains Adidas Originals VP of global Communications Alegra O’Hare.

“The great and unique thing about Adidas is the diversity that we embody both from a product point of view and also through the community of people that we work with. For the first time, Adidas Originals has had the privilege of working with a new group of creators, each of whom are a reference point for the current generations. Collectively they, alongside the powerful voice of Frank Sinatra, bring a new and fresh perspective on the meaning of doing it your way,” O’Hare continues.

“It’s a continuation of a story that started in 2015,” said Leo Premutico, chief creative officer for Johannes Leonardo.

“What the three stripes campaign is about is removing the mental barriers that keep creators from producing their best work and being true to themselves.”

**Comment:**

With 8,342,053 YouTube views in its first week, plus hundreds of thousands of further consumer engagements across other platforms and touch points, the first film quickly turned into something of a phenomenon.

With those numbers it certainly not just appealing to an art school crowd.

It certainly stands apart from so many other big-budget sports brand spots and differentiates the Adidas sub-brand from the likes of Nike and Under Armour as it aims to carve out of genre of its own.

The creative approach adds a fresh twist to Adidas Originals’ positioning as a brand for creators and follows in the footsteps of its recent ad heritage honing this

message that includes last year’s ‘Your Future Is Not Mine’ – also by Johannes Leonardo.

The company is in the middle of developing its revival strategy partly around fashion partnerships with artists and creatives such as Kanye West and the approach looks to be succeeding with Adidas reporting a 20% rise in North American sales for the third quarter of 2016 (according to NPD Group).

But was it a brave or a foolhardy move to feature Jenner in the third ad after her recent, high profile Pepsi commercial fiasco?

There will be a fair few consumers questioning whether she is genuinely an ‘original’?

But Adidas claim the choice is deliberate.

“Kendall Jenner’s courage is something we wanted to celebrate,” says agency co-founder Leo Premutico – citing the media pressure that surrounds the reality star. <



*'Unleash Your Creativity'*  
**Adidas**  
72andSunny

February saw Adidas launch a global 'Unleash Your Creativity' women's campaign led by ambassador advertising and a social video series. This new work revolved around the struggles of a fresh wave of female athlete endorsers and was themed around the idea of 'defying convention'. The initiative was fronted by a 15-strong set of Adidas ambassadors - who all share a personal story about creative invention and drive - ranging from kick-boxing champion Ruqsana Begum, all-star Candace Parker and exercise influencer Hannah Bronfman, to fitness instructor and best-selling author Robin Arzon and model Karlie Kloss.



**The campaign, developed with 72andSunny, is spear-headed by a 30-second, multi-athlete ad debuting on 1 February.**

The hero commercial is amplified through additional campaign pieces deployed across the sportswear giant's vast portfolio of digital platforms and social channels.

These are all further supported by a short film series that brings to life stories of all 15 female athletes around the globe.

For example, Karlie Kloss' spot explores how she uses her imagination to make a difference in the world, while British and European kick-boxing champion Ruqsana Begum talks about how she blazed a trail for Muslim women to access sport.

Further spots in the set feature Miho Nonaka, Nora Vasconcellos, Mariana Pajon, Cassandre Beaugrand, and Hannah Bronfman.

The assets all aim to channel viewers to the initiative's empowering digital hub at [www.adidas.com/here-tocreate](http://www.adidas.com/here-tocreate)

'Unleash Your Creativity' is running internationally in more than 20 markets in media peaks based around key sport events: in the USA these include the Super Bowl, the NBA All-Star Game and The Academy Awards.

'Hard work is a given. We believe that athletes who tap into their creativity have a powerful edge,' explains Adidas senior director of global brand communications Lia Stierwalt.

'The initiative aims to further reinforce the brand's strategy of engaging athlete's imagination in order to unleash their creativity.

'Like this campaign, creativity enables me to accomplish more and follow my passions. It is inspiring to work alongside this incredible group of women and help each other achieve our personal goals,' comments Kloss herself.

**Comment:**

This new campaign dovetails with earlier Adidas gender-specific marketing: including 2016's 'Here To Create' spot series (which featured some of the same endorsers).

It promotes the brand's ongoing commitment to improve the way it serves and also interacts with women athletes by creating new products for them (such as new

footballs specifically for women).

The aim of championing creativity and defying convention has been the focal point of Adidas' positioning and marketing for a while now: with campaigns ranging from 'One In A Billion' to its work with its footballer ambassadors such as Paul Pogba.

This particular initiative sees Adidas continue to adapt this 'creators' umbrella approach to its female focused marketing initiatives which challenge competitor women's empowerment marketing from rivals such as Under Armour's 'I Will What I Want', Nike's 'Better For It' and Reebok's 'Perfect Never'.







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*'Create Positivity'*  
**Adidas**  
72andSunny

Adidas continued to expand its umbrella 'Creative' brand positioning through the summer months with a fresh, new 'Create Positivity' US campaign fronted by a team of sports stars from the Adidas endorser stable: all of whom urge consumers to follow their example and 'call their own shots'. This upbeat and warm athlete ambassador led initiative is spearheaded by an all-singing and all-dancing commercial set to Kid Cudi's 'Surfin' track (featuring Pharrell Williams). This is a typically positive and energetic summer campaign that continues to drive home the brand's ongoing, overarching 'creative' marketing approach.





Amongst other athletes in this campaign's 75-second hero video are Dak Prescott (Dallas Cowboys), Kris Bryant (Chicago Cubs) and Candace Parker (LA Sparks): who are all singing, rapping and chanting about being "too busy makin' my own waves".

Following in the footsteps of the brand's other recent spots, this high-energy film (developed by 72andSunny Los Angeles) combines quick cut-scenes of the sports stars succeeding on courts and in stadiums across the USA.

It includes the increasingly de rigueur playful, social media-inspired shots and closes with the brand's umbrella "Here To Create" tagline.

The hero TV commercial debuted on-air on ESPN during the 'Excellence in Sports Performance Yearly Awards' and was amplified across Adidas' digital and social platforms.

Supporting the hero commercial, there is also a 30-second cut and six shorter, sports-specific digital ads focused on basketball, softball, baseball, street ball, football and futsa

#### Comment

Adidas continues to leverage the idea of 'creativity in sport' in most of its contemporary campaigns as it aims to own the 'creator sports brand' positioning: an approach which has seen something of a reversal of company fortunes as it has been regaining revenue and commercial ground against many of its competitors – particularly Nike.

This summer anthem spot, which has notched up around 10m YouTube views alone since its mid July debut, follows in the footsteps of matching previous work around the world ranging from 'Unleash Your Creativity' (with 32m YouTube views), the James Harden fronted 'Basketball Needs Creators' (6m YouTube Views) and the Paul Pogba led 'Football Needs Creators' (11m YouTube Views). <





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'I Move Me'  
**Asics**  
Saatchi & Saatchi LA

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Asics launched a new global 'I Move Me' brand campaign in London that leveraged its IAAF World Athletics Championships sponsorship. Initially starting in the summer in the host city before rolling out globally, this is Asics biggest brand repositioning and marketing burst in 25 years. 'I Move Me' ([asics.com/imoveme](https://asics.com/imoveme)) - is an initiative designed to make the brand more relevant to a broader audience and to engage beyond its traditional running core. The new tagline, identity, positioning and campaign creative all aim to inspire people of all ages and abilities to move more and to enjoy both the physical and mental benefits of exercise.



**The strategy followed research showing 92% of those who do physical activity believe it improves their mood.**

The launch leverages the sportswear outfit's IAAF partnership around the London 2017 World Athletics Championship (WAC), and yet seeks to expand beyond the confines of Asics' traditional athletics and running core into the wider fashion and outdoor spaces.

The global 'I Move Me' creative, developed in harness with creative agency Saatchi & Saatchi LA, broke around the 4 August start of the WAC with a local, London-led activation phase #IMoveLondon (that included significant input from Edelman).

Designed to 'inspire Londoners to trade the misery of the daily commute for the benefits of getting outside and moving more', the launch wave of work spanned TV, out of home, experiential, digital and social and is spearheaded by a set of brand films led by an #IMoveLondon hero spot (first teased in the second half of July).

This was supported by other films and cuts including 'Run', 'Yoga', 'Urban Athletics', and 'Calasthnetics'.

On the ground in London, another strand based around a light installation and inspired by the city's famous underground network, was called '#RunTheTube' and toured the UK capital encouraging people to move.

As well as on-site, branded space experiences at the London 2017 stadium, there was also a set of evolving general and local social and digital activity as Asics aims to more effectively emotionally engage with consumers.

Plus there is a major retail role in the programme's wider business strategy as Asics expands its store portfolio and focuses more on a 'direct-to-consumer' approach.

Again, this began in London on 1 August when an Asics Regents Street flagship shop, designed by Pitch, opened in a new way that brings together the company's four key brands: Asics, lifestyle brand Tiger, Onitsuka Tiger and outdoor brand Haglöfs.

Further flagship stores in other major cities - such as New York and Tokyo - as well as around 700 additional 'brand locations' and 100 stand alone stores will open/re-open over the next three years.

This multi-million pound store investment follows on from a 10% increase of sales in Asics own full-price stores in the first quarter of the year.

The London work was then followed by the international #IMove roll out via a dual global/dual approach in various markets around the world and different ap-

proaches will be applied in different cities.

For example, other market specific work rolling out included 'I Move Me' creative in Japan, and even some athlete-specific work such as film focusing on transgender athlete Kayla who plays in the WNBA in the US.

The longer term plan is for 'I Move Me' to at least run up to the 2020 Tokyo Olympics (of which Asics is a sponsor) and possibly beyond.

**Comment**

The new approach reinterprets founder Kihachiro Onitsuka's philosophy for the next consumer generation.

Onitsuka, a beer bootlegger and serial entrepreneur, began a basketball shoe business post World War Two which evolved in Asics in 1977 with the idea that sport could relieve distress – the name is an acronym for the Latin motto 'Anima Sana In Corpore Sano / A Sound Mind In A Sound Body'.

Paul Miles, Asics head of global marketing, Paul Miles, argues that brand refresh doesn't so much represent a strategic shift, but rather a modern articulation of its long-established principles.

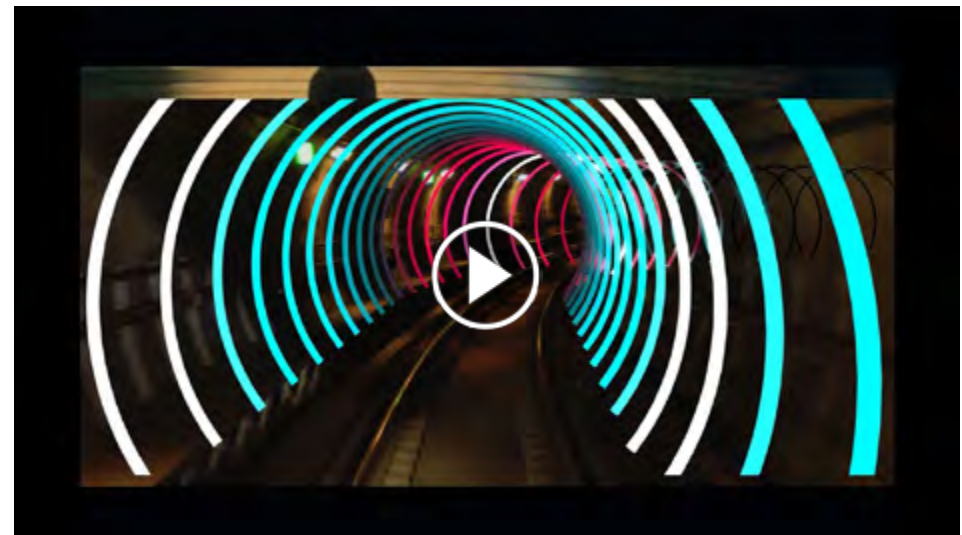
"Brand purpose is core to our DNA, it is our mission, and we haven't been able to tell that story well to a larger audience before," explains Miles.

"A lot of people see us as a very technical running brand, which is great because people trust us for that – but it's not all about that, we're not just about that."

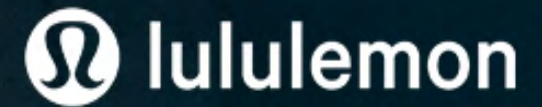
Miles admits in the past the brand has struggled to communicate its purpose effectively and that much of its consumer reputation has been forged in producing high quality technical running gear, rather than through a more emotional consumer connection.

"We needed to have a way to talk about all our brands and our philosophy at one time. I Move Me is an articulation of our mission to get people moving," he outlines. We've always been seen as highly technical, with all the gear people need for long-distance running, and people trust us on this and we're proud of that. Core performance sports will never go away for us because that's really part of our DNA. But it's not all we do. We have more product and services we want to deliver and we haven't really talked about them before."

It'll be particularly interesting to see how the flagship shops work at a time when many of Asics' rivals are currently prioritising their ecommerce operations.







## 'This' Lululemon Virtue

Led by a mini-documentary series, Lululemon's first global brand campaign 'This' aims to transcend yoga and reintroduce the brand to the world. The aim of the initiative - which launched in the Spring and is running across North America, Europe, Asia, and Australia - is to broaden the idea of what yoga is all about and to expand the understanding of what the Lululemon brand is all about. Part of the objective behind this new campaign is to illustrate the inclusivity and accessibility of yoga through a completely different lens - thus none of the campaign footage or ad imagery was filmed or shot inside a studio.

# PRACTICE OF BREATH

P MONEY

[WATCH NOW](#)



**The integrated, multi-platform initiative, which aims to celebrate and honour real stories of practice in action, is led a spearhead spot and a mini documentary series.**

The hero commercial, 'This Is Yoga', is something of a departure from much of the brand's previous creative and the idea is to 'take practice off the mat'.

It doesn't feature yoga gear or mats, but instead focuses on documentary-style glances into the lives of several different characters - none of whom seem like traditional yoga practitioners.

It is supported by a set of seven short-film, mini documentaries.

These include one fronted by UK grime star P Money who discusses the influence of breath on performance: "I found out so much from performing, like how much we are connected to the way we think, breathe, feel. Everything's together. It's crazy. My practice of breath... more importantly, it's given me a life."

Another is led by three-time Olympic gold-medal winner Kerrie Walsh Jennings who discusses the importance of self-discipline: "The practice of self-discipline is showing up every single day. I really feel best when I'm not thinking too much; when I just kind of allow my training to take place, when I just press play I'm just going with the flow."

While Canadian free-movement practitioner Jian Pablico elaborates on his theory of empowerment through nonviolence: "The practice of nonviolence is being kind to myself, being kind to others, and going to every situation that I'm in with love. It has to start with me."

Other supporting work includes out-of-home, in-store and digital campaign elements.

The anthemic flagship spot, the mini-docs and all the supporting assets include the campaign tagline: "Practice in action leads to a purposeful life."

"This is our first global campaign and it's really a reflection of our purpose and values [and] what we want to stand for in the world. For 20 years, this company has been built on how the heartbeat of yoga influences culture," said the Canadian company's Brand & Community EVP Duke Stump.

"[The campaign] started with a burning question. What does this moment need that we are most qualified to deliver?"

In an interesting move, the campaign, which launched in mid May, was developed by Vice Media's in-house agency Virtue.

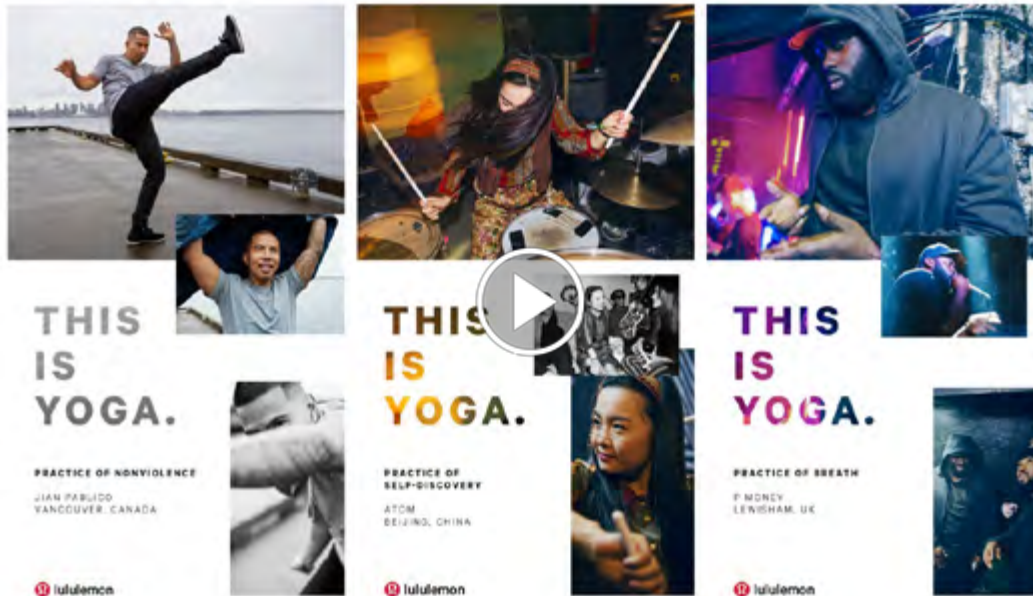
Virtue founder and Vice chief strategic officer Spencer Baim explains how the basic principle of being present in the moment can unite such disparate characters as Beijing punk band drummer Atom, professional surfer Maddie Peterson and rapper P Money and adds: "All these different approaches and tenets make up the philosophy of yoga."

"Every brand searches for authenticity," adds Baim. "[Our team] spent a lot of time with the people we chose to document. We got up to the closest point we could to create an authentic portrait of Lululemon."

**Comment**

We think this work certainly succeeds in terms of feeling fresh and for the sporting goods yoga sub-category it certainly seems inventive, accessible and open.

There is even a hint of the Adidas Originals early 2017 'creative' approach and positioning, but with a much softer feel and without the German brand's harder-edge aggression. <









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*'My Future Self'*  
**New Balance**  
BMB

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Spring saw New Balance launch a new multi-market, multi-property 'My Future Self' idea via its first ECB kit campaign. 'My Future Self' is a global campaign from the sportswear brand that is built around promoting the values, convictions and experiences that have shaped a set of world-class endorser athletes - spanning stars like Joe Root (cricket), Heather Watson (tennis) and Callum Hawkins (athletics). It focuses on the self-improvement opportunities that elite athletes, amateurs and individuals face each day: ones that can help redefine personal ambitions and motivations and lead to a genuine sense of purpose.



**The concept was initially launched through the brand's first work after replacing Adidas as the official England and Wales Cricket Board's (ECB) kit supplier: a kit campaign aiming to raise New Balance awareness and consideration in the UK.**

Developed with agency BMB, this digital, social, video-on-demand and experiential activation, which will run for six months, also includes long-form films and shorter social videos with brand ambassadors like Root, Shona Vertue and Fran Halsall.

The new kits themselves were first introduced at an ECB and New Balance launch event which, as well as the usual PR push (centered on an unveiling at the company's flagship Oxford Street store which saw the range modeled by England test captain Root) was also streamed on Facebook Live.

The reveal was initially socially teased on 2 May, ahead of the main 3 May live launch.

The launch itself was further promoted with a digital/social film of the event.

This was accompanied by the campaign's flagship launch film, 'Dear 677', which also debuted on 2 May and which is fronted by England cricket captain Root.

The numerical title refers to the fact that, at present, through its 140-year history only 676 people have ever played Test cricket for the England men's team.

It is essentially an open letter from the current Test captain to its next player and to future generations of English cricket and includes the copy line 'Greatness isn't given... What would you tell yourself?'

The launch spot is amplified across the sportswear brand's digital and social channels and assets are linked with the campaign's #MyFutureSelf hashtag to encourage user engagement and aim to driver viewers to the brand's digital campaign hub and sales platform at <http://www.newbalance.co.uk/myfutures...>

The supporting content is being distributed extensively across social media: with formats created and optimised for Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat.

Plus the campaign and the new kits themselves also benefit from further digital and social support across the ECB's own channels too

These assets also drive viewers to the ECB's own digital purchasing platform at <https://www.ecb.co.uk/new-balance>.

As the campaign evolves over the next six months,

further long- and short-form films feature other New Balance athlete ambassadors will be amplified and available on both on [newbalance.co.uk](http://newbalance.co.uk).

Jules Chalkey, Chief Creative Officer at BMB Agency adds: "Launching New Balance's new relationship with the England Cricket Board has been an exciting opportunity and New Balance is promoting an exciting future for English cricket: 'Dear 677' is an ode to this future. The future of the game doesn't just exist inside Lords. It exists in the young talent trying to push its way in; the players on the streets up and down the land, in alleys, and on makeshift pitches and patches of ground."

"We wanted to capture cricket in a fresh light with an energy and drive that celebrates every player in every part of the game. And what's most exciting is that this is only beginning of an exciting six-month campaign," continued Jules.

In addition to Chalkey, the BMB team on the project includes executive digital director Ben Lunt, while creatives Pete Ioulianou and Ollie Agius created the film, with further input from business director Farah Winning, head of TV James Bolton and agency producer Jonathan Saunders.

The campaign photographer was Dean Martindale, the director was Jack Driscoll and the production company was Park Village. The producer was Joe Walker, the editors at TenThree were Billy Mead and Liam Backler at Tentree, post production was handled by Mill/BMB, sound design by Dugal Macdiarmid at Wave and the DoP was Patrick Mellor.

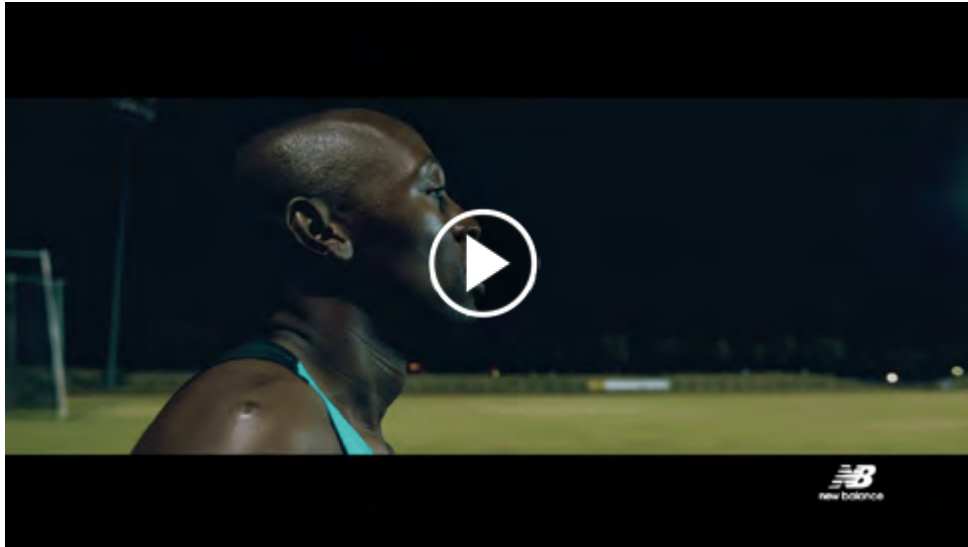
Outside the ECB work, three further flagship long-form films featuring New Balance athletes Root, Heather Watson and Callum Hawkins, plus shorter-form social content with fellow brand endorsers Shona Vertue, Fran Halsall and Pennie Varvarides fronted the big idea.

The first of these films to drop was a two-minute spot featuring Root called 'Joe Root: The moment you think you've made it...you're finished'.

"These films are more than just a series of videos. These are human inspiration stories. They capture the values, convictions and experiences that have shaped our athletes into who they are and they act as a powerful reminder when faced with adversity," explains New Balance UK Brand Marketing Manager Samantha Matthews

"We want these films to inspire the imagination of our audience to define their own ambitions, share their





aspirations and pursue a better version of their present selves.”

MyFutureSelf was also woven into several other New Balance campaigns and activations around the world.

Some examples of these include its work in South Africa for sports partnerships such as with Cricket South Africa and The Comrades Marathon.

For example, Cricket South Africa and New Balance adopted a parallel ad approach to the England and Wales Cricket Board work to launch the new Proteas One Day International kit.

While New Balance’s June work leveraging the gruelling 87km South African ‘Comrades Marathon’ - the world’s oldest and largest ultra-marathon (known as ‘the ultimate human race’) - also revolves around the idea of runners penning a letter to their future selves laying out their values, convictions, sacrifices and what is in store for them during Comrades 2017.

The aim behind this mechanic is that the campaign letters offer competitors inspiration by revealing who the individual participants are, what they want to become and what they would tell their future selves as they prepare for the final lap.

All entrants in the race are encouraged to write a letter to their future self via the campaign’s digital hub (at <https://newbalance.co.za/my-future-self-comrades.php>) and the brand will then email it back to them in a year so that ‘each runner can see how their experiences shaped their journey’.

Developed in harness with SA agency Levery, the letter writing mechanic is promoted and incentivised through various inspirational campaign assets linked by the #myfutureself, #Comrades and #Comrades2017 hashtags.

These are spearheaded by a set of ordinary Comrades 2017 entrants (of varying abilities and spanning demographic segments) who tell their own stories through their letters which are turned into creative executions.

These include online videos, such as ‘Men’ and ‘Women’, as well as the digital hub and online spots, while the initiative is also running across the brand’s social channels like Facebook and Twitter

Most content pieces encourage viewers and participants to ‘write your letter to your future self here’

and drive them online to <https://newbalance.co.za/my-future-se...>

The activation is further supported by additional New Balance event-specific products, social and digital work and a pre-race, brand hosted experiential Comrades evening event.

#### Comment

The ‘My Future Self’ idea reminds us of a similar theme used by Gatorade’s Rio 2016 Olympic ambassador-led ambush initiative which was called ‘Love Of Sport’ and saw athlete endorsers such as Serena Williams, Usian Bolt, Paul George and April Ross visited and motivated by their younger selves.

It is also worth comparing and contrasting New Balance’s ECB kit launch campaign with its work for Cricket South Africa (CSA) which has ranged from the emotionally charged ‘Feel The Fire’ kit launch to more practical experiences such as ‘Training Day’.

As for the kits themselves, well England may be trying to deliver on a promise to play a positive, attacking modern style under new captain Root, but the new kit is something of a stylish throwback to the past.

New Balance’s new Test, One-Day and Twenty20 kits see a return for the traditional cable knit cream sweater worn by England captains through the generations with the three lions restored to its former classic central position.

The classic cricket cable knit was dropped back in 2008 when kit supplier Adidas switched to a brilliant-white sweater (unsurprisingly and inevitably upsetting some of the game’s traditionalists).

But New Balance returns the kit to its roots (no pun intended).

“It’s as traditional as it gets, isn’t it, it’s what Test cricket is about,” said Root.

“The guys in 2005 who won the Ashes wore the old cable knit jumper and there are some great iconic moments in English cricket that are associated with clothes like this so hopefully there will be many more in the future. It feels like I’m a kid again, playing my first couple of games. It’s like my first woollen jumper my grandma knitted me so it takes it all back to the beginning and it’s a nice way to remind yourself that even though there are times when we’re under a lot of pressure it’s a game we enjoy playing. We have to embrace the occasion, go

out and enjoy it.”

England will wear a blue kit in 50-over cricket and a red and blue hooped shirt in Twenty20 matches and the new range will be worn for the first time on Friday 5 May when England start their international summer with two one-day internationals against Ireland.

The American sportswear company inked its new five-year deal with the ECB, reported to be worth around £2m annually, last year after Adidas seemingly reduced its prioritisation and valuation of its cricket strategy after signing its gargantuan £10m per season contract with Manchester United.

New Balance already had sponsorship deals in place with England cricket stars Root and Ben Stokes.

Fran Allen, New Balance’s vice-president for the EMEA region, said when the deal was announced in early April: “The new relationship signals our strong commitment to the sport, in all formats, and at a formative moment as the game looks forward to enhancing its popularity and appeal across an even broader audience. At the same time, this arrangement stands to underpin New Balance’s position as a leading global sporting brand.”

While ECB commercial director, Sanjay Patel, added: “This relationship will form part of our broader strategy to grow the game at every level. It’s a great opportunity for us to work closely with a leading global brand, delivering promotional campaigns which will help cricket reach out to new audiences and achieve even greater exposure as a sport, while connecting with fans across the country.”

But a word of warning: even in this digital age the skills of an experienced copy writer and editor are still vital.

After all, this campaign was criticised by some fans and some on the media because the core content piece, the letter plotted in free verse, has been branded by some as “cringeworthy” and “vacuous” and criticised by others for containing multiple grammatical errors.

It even includes a line saying that the next star of the England team must embark on a journey up a “never-ending flight of stairs” to reach success and has been critiqued and edited by one fan who seems to love his red editing pen just as much as his cricket. <





*'Breaking2'*  
**Nike (Running)**  
Wieden + Kennedy

A live social broadcast coupled with an integrated marketing campaign amplified Nike's brand-owned #Breaking2 bid at Monza race track to break the marathon world record. As Nike announced the time and date its three chosen athlete ambassadors would take the F1 track in northern Italy to try and run the first sub two-hour marathon in history, the sportswear brand launched a three-phase, three-day, brand-owned live event product launch campaign called #Breaking2 that climaxed when Eliud Kipchoge clocked an unofficial new world record (but just missed breaking the two-hour mark by 25 seconds).





**In the first official marketing phase, on the day the time/date if the bid was revealed, work primarily aimed to boost awareness and drive viewers to its online live platforms. This was followed by a race-day phase two which showcased the event live and the third phase saw Nike celebrate the project's athletic achievements.**

On Saturday 6 May at 5:45 am Eliud Kipchoge, Lelisa Desisa and Zersenay Tadese attempted to break the iconic two-hour marathon barrier: the previous best men's time of 2 hours, 2 minutes and 57 seconds was set by Kenyan Dennis Kimetto in Berlin in 2014.

All three athletes wore Nike's new Zoom Vaporfly Elite running shoe and essentially the entire project was primarily a product launch promoted by a campaign (created in harness with Wieden + Kennedy) that revolved around a bespoke, brand-owned, live sports event entirely devised and funded by Nike and its agency.

Of course, public fascination with attempts on athletics records is nothing new: indeed, Nike chose this specific weekend because it is the anniversary of Roger Bannister's world-first four-minute mile in 1954.

While the project didn't quite manage to break the sub two-hour mark, the quickest of the three runners finished in two hours and 25 seconds: an extraordinary achievement smashing the previous quickest marathon time.

Nike's #Breaking2 project gave the three runners a set of unique, Nike-created advantages to tackle the record.

One of those was the time and date: the attempt started at 4.45am (after weather forecasts suggest that this would provide optimum conditions).

Another was the Monza F1 track itself: which Nike analysts believe has the average temperature, air pressure and wind levels and surface efficiency optimal for a world record attempt.

A third was the use of drop-in pace-makers, who joined after the start of a race (this is one of the elements that disqualifies the Nike race from being an official record).

The fourth was, unsurprisingly, the Nike Zoom Vaporfly Elite shoes they wore to race.

While the event itself was closed to the public, runners, sports fans and curious consumers were invited to experience the excitement in real time by tuning into Nike's live stream and the accompanying campaign drove viewers to the brand's live platforms.

It could be viewed through two of Nike's social platforms: Nike's Breaking2 landing page on Twitter and Nike's Breaking2 Facebook page livestream.

Nike also shared live and behind-the-scenes moments around the attempt via its @nike Instagram handle.

Follow #Breaking2 and tweet @nike and #Breaking2Alerts will provide live updates on the race and consumers are also encouraged to use a custom-created Nike Vaporfly Elite shoe emoji on Twitter.

Nike urged viewers to sign-up on its digital hub to receive a notification reminder for when the attempt is happening and how it was progressing.

Live Breaking2 coverage, hosted by Sal Masekela with expert analysis and commentary by Paula Radcliffe, Craig Masback and Kevin Hart (assisted by other special guests), began around 15 minutes before race start.

The brand has also teamed up with the National Geographic to produce a feature length Breaking2 documentary which will air later in the summer.

To coincide with the official announcement of the attempt date, Nike rolled out an integrated promotional initiative across its digital and social platforms: including Twitter, and Instagram.

These assets aim not simply to gener-

ate awareness and boost interest, but also to drive viewers to follow the race on Twitter and/or watch the attempt live on the brand’s Facebook page

During the first, pre-race marketing phase, the brand event was also promoted by a series of spots. Led by a 60-second trailer posted on 4 May in which Nike declares: “We believe barriers are meant to be broken—even one as crazy as running a marathon under 2 hours. Can it be done? There’s no better way to find out. #Breaking2 #JustDoIt”

This central video was supported by a series of online films including a longer form ‘Conquering the 2-Hour Marathon’, plus ‘Why Monza?’, ‘Legs’, and, of course, the trainers/shoes/product itself in a spot called ‘The Innovation’.

These were joined by a general ‘Meet the Runners’ spot, as well as individual videos focusing on each of the three competing athletes: Eliud Kipchoge, Zersenay Tadese, and Lelisa Desisa.

As the start time approached Nike released a countdown spot followed by the livestream and then within a few minutes of the finish it rolled out a video titled with the fastest time ever recorded: ‘2:00:25.

**Comment**

Yes, trying to break the two-hour marathon barrier is a crazy idea! That’s why Nike did it.

Yes, Nike’s marathon attempt is a PR stunt! But it is one that is hard to ignore

While the project attracted plenty of controversy, particularly as Nike paid the athletes to miss the prestigious London and Berlin marathons to focus on the feat, post event even rival Adidas praised the feat.

Whatever the outcome, as far as Nike is concerned the Breaking2 project has already succeeded.

Not just because its marketing machine has generated massive event excitement

and engagement, but also because the sheer audacity of the stunt makes it tough to ignore.

This is an approach straight out of the Red Bull ‘Stratos’ school of sports/stunts strategy.

A brand-created and brand-owned sports event stunt built around adventurous, talented ambassadors trying to achieve the impossible and attracting millions of consumers to follow the training and watch the event live.

PR driven brand stunts like Nike’s ‘#Breaking2’, Red Bull ‘Stratos’ and even brand-own strands connected to or within an event such as Betfair’s ‘Swapping Saddles’ all illustrate just how far innovative and adventurous companies are prepared to go to reap the benefits of ownable, live sport and entertainment passion platforms.

They also highlight our ongoing obsession with audacity, breaking records and with new technologies.

In terms of results, the social media statistics suggest success too.

#Breaking2 trended worldwide and generated 30 million impressions in the first 24 hours after the race.

This single post-race tweet from Nike was retweeted 14.5K times and gained 15m impressions.

So what’s next?

Will Addidas, Asics, New Balance or Under Armour step up to the Nike’s challenge?

What will the next ‘moonshot’ be? <









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## 'My Sole Story' Nike (Shanghai Marathon) AKQA

Nike Running's 'My Sole Story', activating around the 2016 Shanghai Marathon, won both a Cannes Lions silver for digital craft (in the aesthetic design class) and a bronze for digital craft (in the data storytelling section).

The initiative was based on the idea that 'through the uphill and the downhill, and the pain, the rain, and finally, at the point of your hard-earned victory, your shoes were always there'. The Nike team worked on the project with agency AKQA, and together rolled out 'My Sole Story' as a personalized run-down of each individual runner's marathon journey – as told from the perspective of their shoes.

**An H5 mobile site powered by your Nike+ data was created to enable runners to customise their own training progress and every breakthrough logged in to Nike+ is reflected in the experience and enables the user to 'Relive the run. Relive the journey'.**

The experience itself launched on 30 October 2016 - Shanghai Marathon race day.

At the exact moment of victory when each participant crossed the finish line, Nike aimed to remind each and every runner that this was 'more than a race, more than months of training, more than a commitment made to yourself months ago'.

So it launched 'My Sole Story' films powered by each individual's personal Nike+ data: each customised spot retraced every stage of emotion throughout your running journey - from the shoes perspective of course.

Racers scanned a QR code at the Shanghai Marathon finish line to personalize My Sole Story.

The site combined animation with Nike+ data points, including their miles trained day and night, their finish time, as well as a photo celebrating victory with their shoes - all packaged into a digital experience that was shareable to their friends on WeChat, China's biggest social network.

30,000 racers relived their run, with 2,500 films created in just 24 hours. Conversion rate to Nike.com was 8.3%, +20% more than the average Nike activation.

My Sole Story lives on as a storytelling platform for future races around China. <





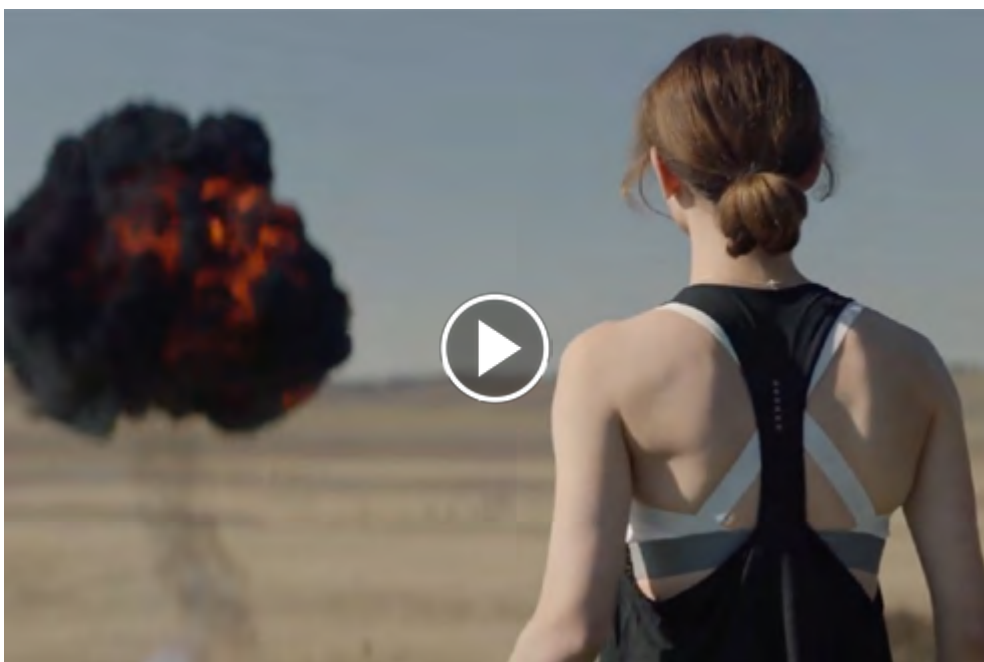
A MOBILE  
FILM POWERED  
BY  +



>

## 'No Turning Back' Nike (Australia) Wieden+Kennedy

A new, integrated 2017 'No Turning Back' campaign by Nike aimed to inspire young Australians and reawaken their (lost) love for sport. Mid June saw Nike Australia team up with a set of local market athlete ambassadors to launch a new brand campaign revolving around 'No Turning Back' moments in sport. The initiative was developed in harness with long-term creative agency partner Wieden+Kennedy (Portland) and essentially aimed to act as a call-to-arms to the nation's youth: an attempt to reawaken young Aussies and inspire them to celebrate the creative joy of sport and to play like there's nothing to lose.



**Nike's first Australian local market specific work in a decade, this campaign is fronted by a set of star Australian athletes from Nike's endorser stable and these icons aim to inspire young Australians to release their inner competitive spirit.**

The group of Australian athletes - which includes tennis pro Nick Kyrgios, athlete Genevieve LaCaze, NRL players James Tedesco and Cameron Smith and soccer player Tom Rogic - are drawn from different sports and various codes to reflect differing aspects of competitive sporting 'passion and joy'.

The integrated, multi-platform and multi-phase campaign is spearheaded by a set of four new TVC spots: each of these hero commercials features an athlete ambassador in an unusual 'No Turning Back' situation.

The first ads debut on 21 June during the iconic Australian sporting institution that is the NRL's 'State of Origin' game on Channel Nine.

One of the first pair of spots, 'Museum', sees NRL star James Tedesco deliberately touch a priceless work of art in order to ensure his only way out of the gallery is to dodge and weave his way past the security guards.

This cheeky video sees Tedesco, who will play for New South Wales in the State Of Origin game, place himself in a position that puts him under pressure and means 'there is no turning back' from the challenge.

The second of the debut ads, 'Cliff', sees athlete Genevieve LaCaze drive out of Sydney into the outback, then push her car off a cliff in order to force herself to run back to the city.

The final two TV ads in the series - one of which sees a young girl handcuffs herself to LaCaze in order to keep the pace in a race - will roll out over the coming weeks.

The spots, which were shot in Australia, are being amplified across the sportswear brand's usual Australian market digital and social platforms - including Twitter.

Additional digital elements have been developed to create a two-way dialogue with consumers and to encourage viewers to socially share their own 'no turning back' moments.

In addition to the TV and social work, the campaign spans outdoor, experiential events, digital, as well as in-store and PR strands.

The OOH strand includes large-scale poster sites across Australia: including the high profile Glebe Sydney silos.

It also included a projection onto the side of the MCG in Melbourne when the Australian football team played Brazil last week.

The brand is using these key outdoor sites to spark mass market, mainstream conversation.

Plus, to mark the campaign launch, Nike Australia hosted a panel debate fronted by Fox Sports news presenter Louise Ransome and featuring some of Australia's highest profile sports stars and personalities (such as Andrew Johns, Steve Moneghetti, AFL star Nic Naitanui, footballer Kyah Simon, netballer Kim Ravaillion and skater Hayley Wilson) who discussed how best to get Australia inspired to compete and shared their own 'No Turning Back' stories.

According to the brand, this campaign was two years in the making and its origins lie in a Nike research and insights project that explored the relationship Australian youth has with sport.

The research was carried out by the brand and 50 Australian sporting industry experts, professional and amateur athletes and youngsters and revolved around the pressures Australian children experience in sport.

According to Nike Australia marketing director Brant Hirst, this project came up with some surprising findings around negative associations with competition in sports (something Australia is not typically/usually known for).

So Nike wanted its next promotional initiative to address that, to 'change their current perceptions of sport', to 'focus on getting young people back into sports' and 'inspire them to play like they have nothing to lose' and 'reawaken their love for competing'.

"The research was pretty telling. We discovered some things about our consumers' relationship with sport that really surprised us," explains Hirst.

'The biggest thing was that young people

were starting to feel an unhealthy pressure about winning and performance, not the old love of competition and spirit of sport that Aussies have always embraced. When we thought about what that might do to enjoyment and participation in sport in Australia, we felt we could take a leadership position to bring some of that healthy passion and joy back.'

Hirst claims that this locally-driven project, which is the end point of a personal and professional passion, is a long term play for the brand.

"The heritage of sport in Australia is something we've been really proud of, and we wanted to make sure that when there was the right moment in time, that we could take a leadership position around Australians and sport. 'No Turning Back' is a call to action for the young of Australia.

"We're saying 'embrace that pressure'. Do what athletes before you have done, choose to go forward regardless."

While no official investment figures have been released by Nike, this initiative marks its biggest Australian marketing expenditure in a long time and its first major local push in a decade.

"We're always looking for the best balance of [global and local] work that means something, but this is 100% Australian work, from insight, through strategy and into production," adds Hirst.

"Historically, competition was always just as important as winning. It's what made Australia the most successful underdog-sporting nation. Nike's 'No Turning Back' campaign was developed to awaken the naturally competitive spirit that lies at the heart of every Australian young athlete and inspire them to play like they have nothing to lose."

The campaign was created for Nike Australia's marketing director Brant Hirst and brand communications manager Alex Tjioe by a Wieden+Kennedy (Portland) team led by creative directors Alberto Ponte and Ryan O'Rourke and included Sara Philips, Alex Romans, David Chathas, Irina Tone, Barrie Wilhelmi, Simone Takasaki, Lisa Johnson, Ryan Craven, Luiza Prata Carvalho & Patrick Gulliford

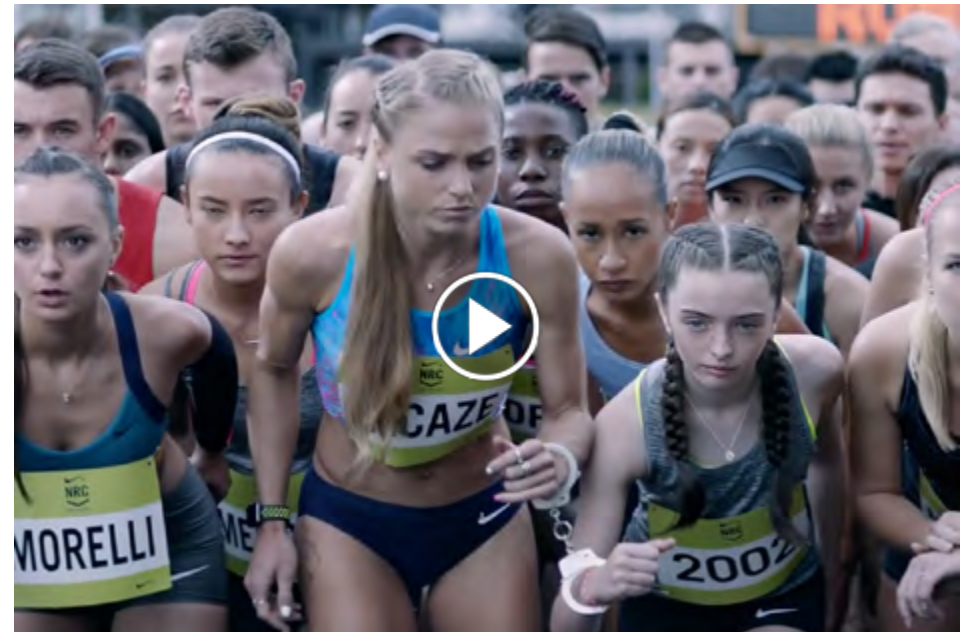
The ads were directed by Steve Ayson and the media agency was Mindshare.

### Comment

As ever with Nike and W+K, 'No Turning Back' smartly embraces the sportswear behemoth's long term 'Just Do It' attitude and captures the brand's classic irreverent and bold tone.

Nike's investment in TV commercials during the high profile, big audience and pricy State of Origin game marks a significant media investment in free-to-air television – something new for Nike in the Australian market.

The success of the strategy will be determined by measuring the campaign's impact in three principle areas: brand uplift, engagement with staff and customers, and commercial performance. <





*'Unlimited'*  
**Nike (Olympic Ambush)**  
Wieden+Kennedy

Nike leveraged (ambushed) the Rio 2016 Olympics with an athlete ambassador led, multi-platform, multi-phase 'Unlimited' initiative, developed with agency Wieden + Kennedy, which won a Campaign Film Gold at Cannes Lions 2017. Nike's definition of 'Unlimited' means being and doing without limits and when it comes to athletes it means endless possibility. The umbrella idea here is that Nike and Nike's customers never define themselves by what has come before, or by the past, but rather by defying their own expectations: that there is never 'too far', only 'what's next?'

UNLIMITED FUTURE



**'The end is really just the beginning for someone who's looking to go beyond their limits, and that's what that shattering logo represents,' explains Nike Global Corporate Communications Director Brian Strong.**

Nike has been busy applying this 'Unlimited' creative concept and brand belief not only to its marketing, but also to its design and products - such as the 'Unlimited Colorway' which is inspired by bodies in motion and the vibrant flora and fauna of tropical rainforests (hint - Rio Olympics and Brazil).

The umbrella Unlimited campaign was actually initially teased with a Serena Williams focused spot around Wimbledon, before its main hero commercial (fronted by actor Bobby Cannavale) called 'Unlimited' Future' launched to kick-start the core Olympic phase of the campaign.

'Champions Aren't Born, They're Made!' is one of several rousing line in Cannavale's baby nursery, pre Olympic pep talk - which takes the sports locker room motivational speech onto a hospital baby ward.

The recipients of these inspirational lines are of baby-me versions of some of Nike most famous endorsers who are all about to compete at the Olympic Games: including Serena Williams, LeBron James, Neymar Jr, Mo Farah and Zhou Qi.

The little kids lie in their cots while sharp suited Cannavale tells them that life is messed up, that they don't choose where they are born or their names, but that they do get a say in their future.

Released globally two weeks ahead of the Summer Games, this core Unlimited spot was helmed by independent film director Damien Chazelle (Whiplash) and developed in harness with regular Nike agency Wieden & Kennedy, Portland.

The W+K team working for Nike's senior director of global brand communication Ean Lensch included global creative directors Alberto Ponte and Ryan O'Rourke, copywriter Josh Bogdan and art director Pedro Izique.

The main spot was amplified socially, while the wider 'Unlimited' campaign evolved across multiple platforms and via the brand's Unlimited digital hub (where it explores the determination

and struggle on the road to greatness with athlete specific films hosted at <http://news.nike.com/just-do-it-2016>).

Like most Nike sports ads, this is certainly inspirational, but the cuteness and humour reflects a slightly different approach from the sports behemoth's usual ad approach.

It follows the usual tried and tested Nike sports event ambush strategy: fronting stunning films with property relevant Nike athlete endorsers.

And Nike (with long-time agency W+K) sure know how to make stylish guerrilla spots.

They succeeded at Euro 2016 with Ronaldo fronted 'The Switch' and they are succeeding here with this Rio 2016 ambush.

After all, with 20,737,123 YouTube views (and 18.5k thumbs up), plus 3.8k retweets and 5.8k likes on Twitter and 6.6k likes and 4.7k shares on Facebook in its first 24 hours, this spot is certainly gaining the usual Nike traction.

Albeit with a more direct Olympic connection, the core commercial worked in parallel with the brand's other ongoing 'Unlimited' creative which had already included athlete-specific strands including a post Wimbledon win Serena Williams spot and creative focusing on Allyson Felix, Mo Farah, Ashton Eaton and Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce.

The following phase of Unlimited rolled out a day ahead of the Games with the non-celebrity, everyman/everywoman 'Unlimited You' spot timed to leverage interest in the Opening Ceremony.

This spot depicts everyday athletes as well as sports stars achieving incredible goals and focused the attention on the consumer everyman as well as the Olympians.

While it also features endorsers like Kevin Durant, Serena Williams, Giancarlo Stanton, Nyjah Huston and Neymar Jr, it is the so called 'Average Joes' who really inspire through stunning sporting achievements and push the limits of possible.

It's just as much about amateur marathons and youngsters' personal bests as Olympic medals.

This ad is narrated by 'Star Wars: The Force Awakens' actor Oscar Isaac and at mid-point in the spot Isaac's voiceover begs them to stop and





exclaims ‘everybody is going way to far’, but, of course, there is no stopping these youngsters.

The voiceover at the campaign climax closes with: ‘When everyone pushes their limit they reach their maximum potential and live happily ever after!’

‘Unlimited You’, while still created by regular Nike agency Wieden+Kennedy, was shot in their own unique creative style by Daniels (the working name of the director partnership between Dan Kwan and Daniel Scheinert – best known for indie movie ‘Swiss Army Man’).

Despite having to jump through all the usual strict Nike approval hoops, the directors and W+K fought hard to retain as much creative control as possible – considering this was a Nike project.

‘The spot is about athletes pushing their limits more than they thought they could, and then doing more and more and more,’ says Wieden & Kennedy copywriter Edward Harrison.

‘It made sense to us that as the athletes did more and more, that things would get crazier and more frantic to match.’

While the Daniels themselves report that it was actually the logistical issues that were the biggest challenge in making a spot involving more than 20 locations, 70 characters and roughly 500 extras.

‘We tried to be really upfront with all those changes and make sure everyone was excited about how far we could push things and how playful it could be for a Nike spot,’ explains Kwan.

‘We like working with non-actors, but athletes are a very special genre of non-actor,’ Scheinert adds.

With 23.1m YouTube views alone in its first week, it seems Nike’s Unlimited Olympic athlete ambassador ambush gained genuinely good traction.

More iterations and further phases of Unlimited then rolled out through August when Nike celebrated trans Olympians and the concept of contemporary patriotism with two further Olympic-themed spots: ‘Courage’ (featuring transgender Olympian Chris Mosier) and ‘Together’ (starring Chance the rapper).

Seemingly markedly different subject matters,

both commercials align neatly under the sports-wear behemoth’s long-running inspirational ‘Unlimited’ initiative.

In ‘Unlimited Courage’ duathlete Chris Mosier, the first transgender athlete to compete as part of the USA’s Men’s Olympic team replies to the type of questions asked by those who know very little about what being transgender actually means:

‘How did you know you were fast enough to compete with men?’ ‘How did you know you were strong enough?’ ‘How did you know they’d accept you?’ And each time his reply is the same: ‘I didn’t’

This spot cuts trough partly because it isn’t an overwrought story of stress and struggle alongside a swelling string-led orchestral score, but is a touch jaunty and even light-hearted in its approach.

The other spot in the series, released around 10 August, is ‘Unlimited Together’ and actually activates around the USA Men’s and Women’s National Basketball teams (without specific Team USA rights, but with plenty of Nike sports star endorsers).

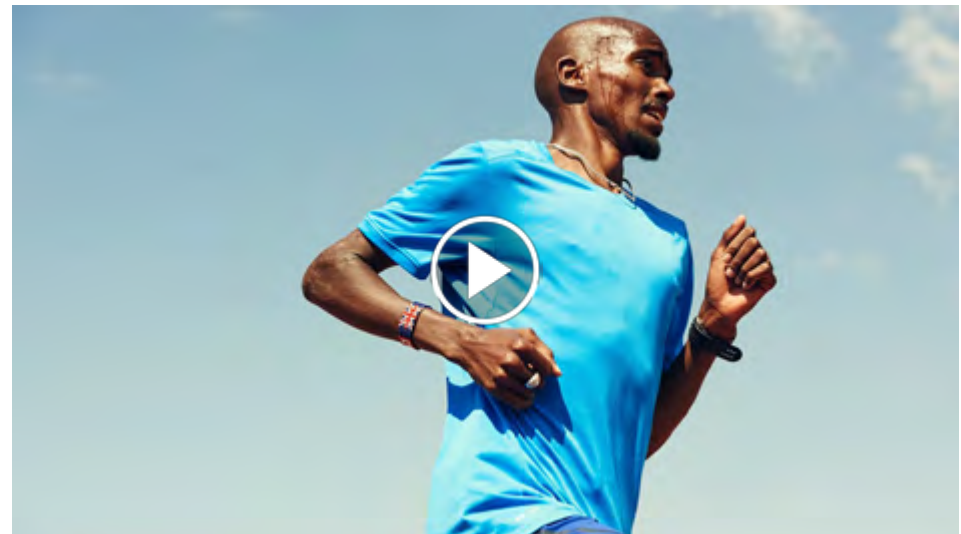
A more sombre, black-and-white piece of creative in the form of an all-new spoken/sung/rapped minor-key piano ballad from Chicago-born rapper Chance.

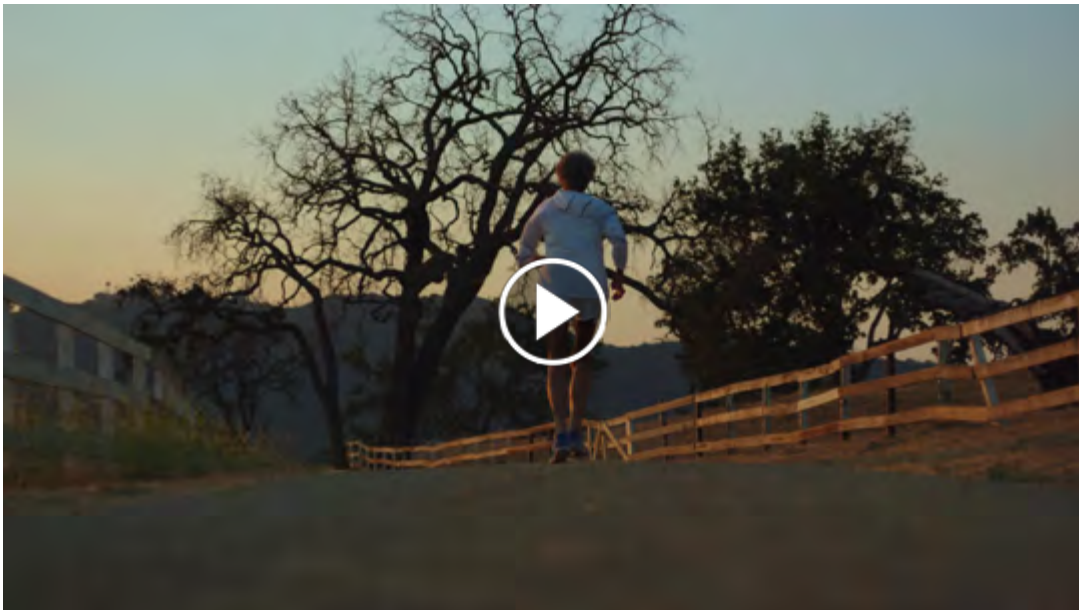
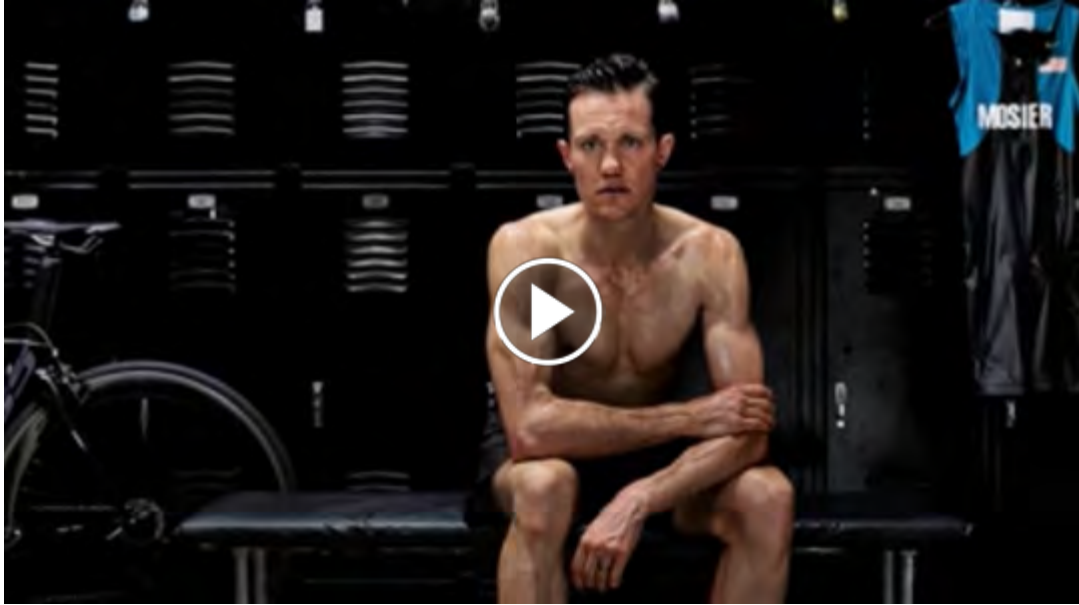
Whilst it does include an image of the star and stripes, it actually talks a less traditionally Americana-style approach to US patriotism.

America—playground basketball courts, southern porches, city streets—peppered throughout, offering a different take on the patriotism than the Olympics offers, but one that feels very legitimate.

These individual ‘Unlimited’ commercials have been rolling out globally on broadcast television and across a variety of digital channels and social platforms since July’s Serena Williams and Mo’Nique ads, then culminating in the immediately eve of Rio games hero ‘Unlimited Future’ commercial, and the in-Games ‘Unlimited You’ work that switched the focus to the consumer/watcher rather than the famous athlete endorsers.

Within a week both ‘Courage’ and ‘Together’ racked up around 3m YouTube views each – a mightily impressive number (especially consider-





ing that there are 10s and 10s of spots in Nike's Unlimited Series).

Before and during the Olympics, it seems marketers promoting all types of brands and businesses are agreed that one route to sure-fire sports star sponsor success is to produce inspirational spots revolving around athlete stories of commitment.

How many pieces of creative have we sat through featuring athletes overcoming hardship, pushing their bodies to the limits and striving for greatness against the odds?

Some, like Under Armour's darkly striking Michael Phelps film, have been spectacularly successful both in terms of engagement metrics and winning awards.

Whilst others have just passed us by in the athlete-led advertising avalanche.

Yet several of the spots in Nike's 'Unlimited' series truly stand out and these are two such examples.

Not least because they feel legitimate and don't overplay their hand.

They might take a similar creative and tactical approach to other work, but they are so finely crafted and their stories so inspirational and emotional that they can be hard to ignore.

The Mosier spot also, albeit subtly, continues the current trend for sports sponsors and advertisers to take on heavy hitting social-cultural issues – an approach we have seen that spans Guinness' 'Never Alone' campaign that included tackling homosexuality via a 'Gareth Thomas' and racial prejudice via an 'Ashwin Willemse' spot at last year's Rugby World Cup, to some truly brilliant Paralympic work around Rio 2016 like the organising committee's 'MindChanger Workout' and even Channel 4's 'We're The Super Humans'. <





*'Unlimited Stadium'*  
**Nike Lunar**  
BBH (Singapore)

It took 80,000 hours to build the world's coolest and most futuristic running track as the centrepiece of Nike's multi-Gold Lion winning 'Unlimited Stadium' participatory experience. Working with BBH Singapore, the pop-up, high-tech running track was erected on a city block in Manila (Philippines) during the Rio 2016 Olympic Games (thus leveraging/ambushing the Olympics) and it was designed specifically to match the exact dimensions of a Nike Lunar Epic footprint for the launch of the sportswear brand's new Nike Running footwear range. It was, of course, just much, much bigger than a normal sized Lunat Epic shoe.





**This project saw the construction of a 200-meter long, usable running track, lined with LED screens, which enabled local runners to engage in a virtual race against avatars of themselves: a campaign that fused the virtual and physical worlds.**

For a period of 17 days, up to 30 local amateur runners at any one time were invited to engage in a virtual race against their own cyber selves.

After setting their pace in the first lap, a full size 'ghost self runner' appears on the screens and, via a series of time and distance challenges runners aimed to beat their avatar (which, then, responds to the real person's performance and again ups the stakes to push them beyond their limits).

This initiative won as many as 15 Cannes Lions – spanning the cyber, outdoor, creative data, promo & activation and entertainment categories.

The experience was created in parallel with the launch of Nike's Olympic led 'Unlimited' campaign which challenged and celebrated athletes everywhere to push their limits.

David Webster, Managing Partner, BBH Singapore said: "We are very proud to have brought home to Singapore 15 Cannes Lions. That an agency from Singapore is recognised on the global stage is testament to the fact that creativity is alive and well in Singapore and that some of the world's best talent is found here." <





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*'Words'*  
**Nike**  
Wieden + Kennedy

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Nike Running's series of 'Text' spots, which won Cannes Lions silver (film - clothing, footwear and accessories), aim to mock and inspire the smartphone and social media generation and urge them to get out and run. This stark, text-based campaign - with only white text on a plain black background and a simple robotic voiceover - urges viewers to stop wasting their time on pointless social media, screen-based nonsense and get outside to run instead. This is a Trainspotting-style rant urging today's born-digital generation to stop wasting so much time on pointless screen-based drivel and to go outside and exercise instead.

**RUNNING TODAY?**



**This initiative marked one of the few times Nike has railed against contemporary cultural and sees the brand ditch its signature striking visuals for black and white, copy-only simplicity.**

The campaign features six different spots, each attacking one aspect of contemporary screen-led social culture.

The spearhead spot is a one-minute 'choose-life' style plea: with a Siri-esque robotic voiceover reading out the simple words on the dark background and a closing tagline that reads: 'This commercial is just one minute, compared to the ten hours a day you spend glued to your screens.'

It is followed by a set of shorter videos that mock the frivolous and senseless social media subjects that seem to dominate so much of Facebook, Instagram and Twitter (without specifically naming any of these platforms).

These include 'Opinions', 'Pictures', 'Celebrities', 'Friends' and even 'Zombies'

The campaign was created by regular Nike agency Wieden & Kennedy Portland.

#### Comment

We are so used to the slick, stylish and cinematic visuals in Nike's advertising output, that on the rare occasions that the brand eschews its signature style we certainly notice it.

While we've seen this kind of speed-reading spot before – think, for example, of Honda's 'Keep Up' commercial in early 2015, perhaps the most interesting thing about the new Nike work is the socio-cultural comment of the strategy and messaging.

Does the fact that a mass-market brand like Nike is critiquing contemporary culture suggest the start of a backlash against the social media and smartphone generation?

Probably not!

But we might be witnessing something of a socio-cultural slowdown, as Nike is not the only giant brand questioning the role of

social.

The Nike campaign launched on the same day that Coca-Cola's global CMO Marcos de Quinto championed the role of traditional TV advertising.

De Quinto told a drinks industry event in New York that it was television that offered the best return on investment and that the company needed a new approach to digital marketing.

His presentation included one slide showing Coca-Cola's TV investment delivered an ROI of \$2.13 per dollar spent compared with \$1.26 for digital, while another trumpeted that social media is a strategy for those who don't have a true digital strategy.

'TV is still very, very critical for our business' and that while the drinks giant is trying to make its company digital, this doesn't mean just putting ads on social media,' said De Quinto

The Nike campaign and the Coca-Cola comments also follow on from Facebook admitting (for the third time) that it had misreported metrics – adding to doubts about whether advertisers are getting what they are paying for on social channels.

An issue that also surfaced back in August when some mega advertisers pulled back on their Facebook ad spend plans and when the world's biggest advertiser P&G announced that it was rethinking its Facebook strategy and shifting spend away from targeted Facebook ads.

Is this a one-off or a sign of things to come? <



SCREW  RIVER.

CELE  RITY

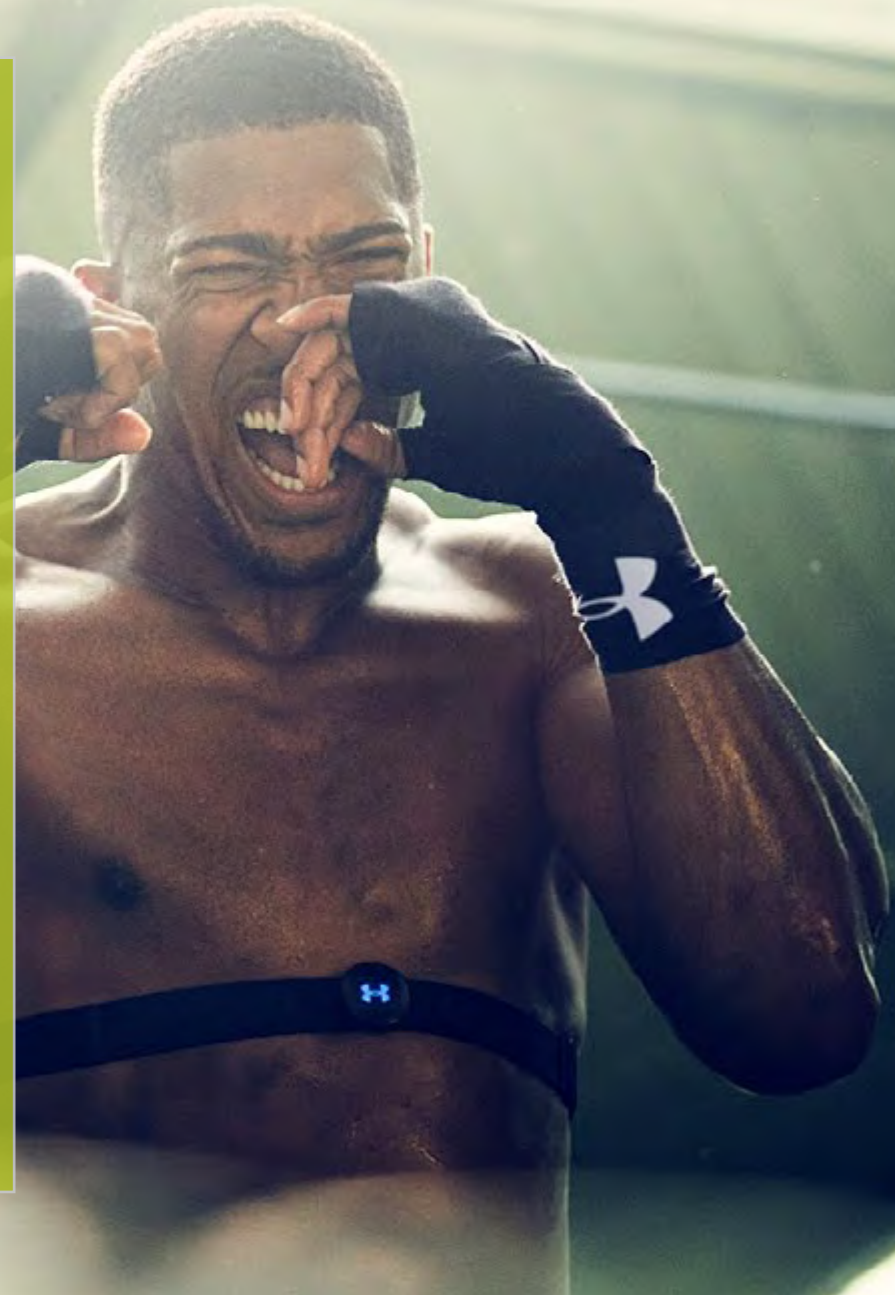
OPIN  IONS

FRI  NDS



*'Inspired By Greatness AJ'*  
**Under Armour**  
Droga5

Under Armour leveraged its Anthony Joshua partnership ahead of his world heavyweight title fight with 'Inspired By Greatness'. The Baltimore based sports apparel brand activated its sponsorship with British boxer Anthony Joshua ahead of his world heavyweight title fight against Vladimir Klitschko through a new campaign called 'Inspired By Greatness'. Launched on 26 April, just two days ahead of the 90,000 Wembley Stadium bout, the campaign ran under the sportswear giant's umbrella #IWill big idea, echoes Ali and focuses on never losing the hunger, the hustle or the grind.



**The campaign was led by a 42-second ad which closes with an interesting, lengthy final still frame to drive viewers to UA web shopping platform.**

The spot is amplified as a whole and in edited cut downs across Under Armour's digital and social platforms - including a set of 'never forget where you came from' clips on Facebook.

The activation is supported by various social content pieces rolling out on both Under Armour's and Joshua's own channels ahead of the big fight.

Plus an 'Always A Hunter, Never The Hunted' section on Under Armour's digital hub at <http://www.underarmour.co.uk/en-gb/athlete/Anthony-Joshua.html> which promotes the brand's AJ range stretching from HeatGear Baselayer, Threadborne, Sportstyle collection and Charged Ultimate.

Indeed, there are further product-specific social assets deployed as part of the big fight activity.

Chris Bate, Under Armour's managing director for Europe, said: 'During his preparation for the Klitschko fight and beyond, we will equip Anthony with our most innovative performance products including our Threadborne technologies and Connected Fitness footwear and platforms. We are thrilled to have Anthony as part of the Under Armour team.'

#### Comment

Under Armour is a big backer and a big believer in Joshua and is using him as a flagship ambassador far beyond his home UK market.

Joshua and Under Armour both lay claim to being 'the next big thing' and therein lies part of the synergy and the strategic sense in the tie-up.

Both brand and boxer seem to be benefiting from their combined social activity: almost every post on his own platforms features a picture of the fighter wearing Under Armour gear.

The combination and the creative generated some solid fight fan engagement - as illustrated by the early campaign metrics.

Within 24 hours of its release, the spot generated 317,583 YouTube views

Under Armour first added Joshua to its endorser stable back in early 2016 as it strengthened its boxing credentials via a three-year sponsorship

deal which began with the boxer and his team promoting the brand's training and in-ring apparel and its footwear range prior to Joshua's first (successful) IBF title shot against champion Charles Martin.

The deal saw the London 2012 Olympic gold medallist join Under Armour's expanding roster of (largely) young athletes across a range of sports: from tennis star Andy Murray, to Dutch footballer Memphis Depay, and NBA super star Stephen Curry, plus established athletes like quarterback Tom Brady and skier Lindsey Vonn.

'Success only comes from investing time and effort in everything you do - something I hold close to my heart. With the same values, Under Armour is the ideal partner to help me achieve this and I'm proud to have them on my team,' said Joshua when he penned his first UA deal.

'Having Under Armour in my corner is a huge show of support from one of the world's leading sports brands. I couldn't ask for a better partner to help my performances, whether training or in the ring; I'll relish every challenge we'll face.'

While Bate added: 'Anthony Joshua encapsulates what our brand is about. He's a man that has achieved greatness, and will continue to do so, through relentless passion, drive and determination.'

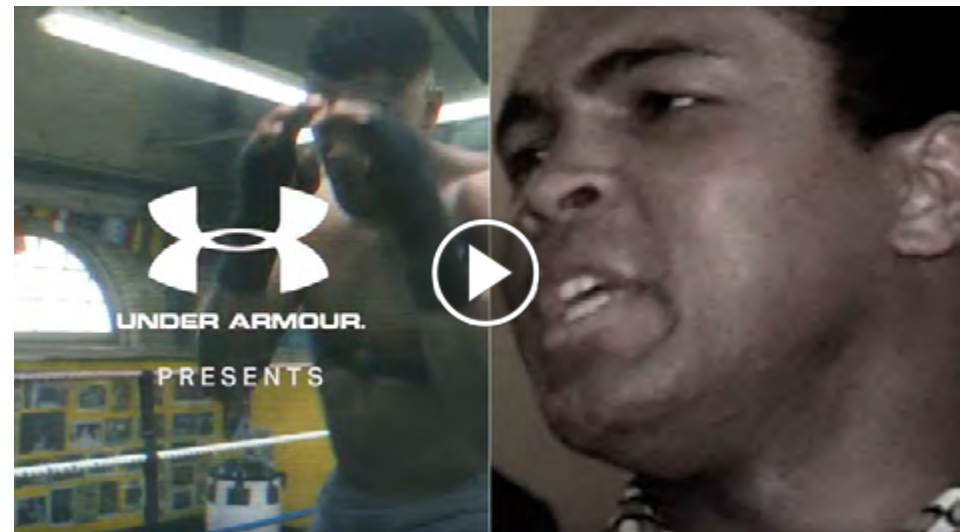
"From the first sparring session to the last bell, Anthony will have our innovative footwear, apparel and training tools at his disposal. We're proud to help Anthony every step of the way, as he establishes himself as one of the world's greatest boxers."

In February 2017, reflecting his success and growing global appeal, Under Armour extended the relationship with a new multi-year deal.

The fresh alliance sees the Baltimore company supply the IBF world heavyweight champion with his in-ring apparel, while Joshua lent his image to Under Armour's future marketing campaigns.

'I am delighted to be committing my long-term future to Under Armour,' commented Joshua.

'It is a partnership that has been incredibly successful to date, the brand has helped me increase performance with custom products and new technologies.'





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*'Various'*  
**Creative Showcase**  
Campaign Snapshot

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Adidas 'Here To Create (Man Utd)'  
Adidas 'NFL Combine Island Prize'  
Adidas 'Run To Mum'  
Adidas 'Next Is Everything'  
Asics 'Thermographic Print Ad'  
Asics 'Dont Run, Fly (London)'  
Canterbury 'Lions Jersey Launch'  
Dick's Sporting Goods 'Keepers....' (Tribeca D.S.)  
Nike 'Badge Of Honour'  
Nike 'What Will they Think'  
Hummel 'The Great Grass Plantation'  
Nike Jordan 'The Playground'  
Nike Jordan 'Welcome'  
Nike Jordan 'Why Not 0'  
Intersport 'Run The Spring'  
Reebok 'Gym Pick Up Lines'  
Under Armour 'Sleepwear'  
Under Armour 'Murray & Riner'  
Under Armour 'Murray (Queens)'  
Puma 'Valentine's Day'





Adidas 'Here To Create Man Utd'



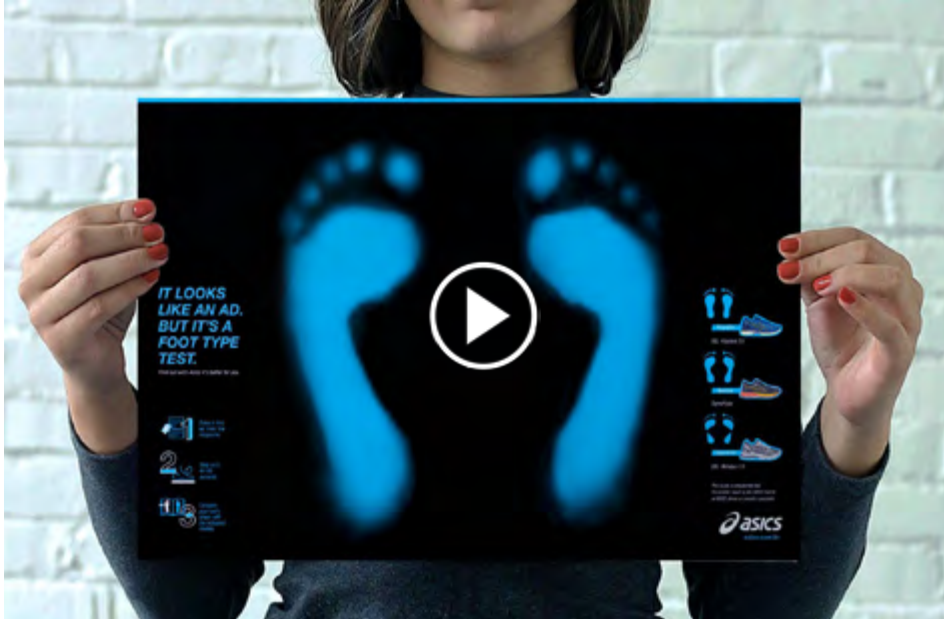
Adidas 'Island Prize'

Adidas 'Run To Mum'



Adidas 'Next Is Everything'

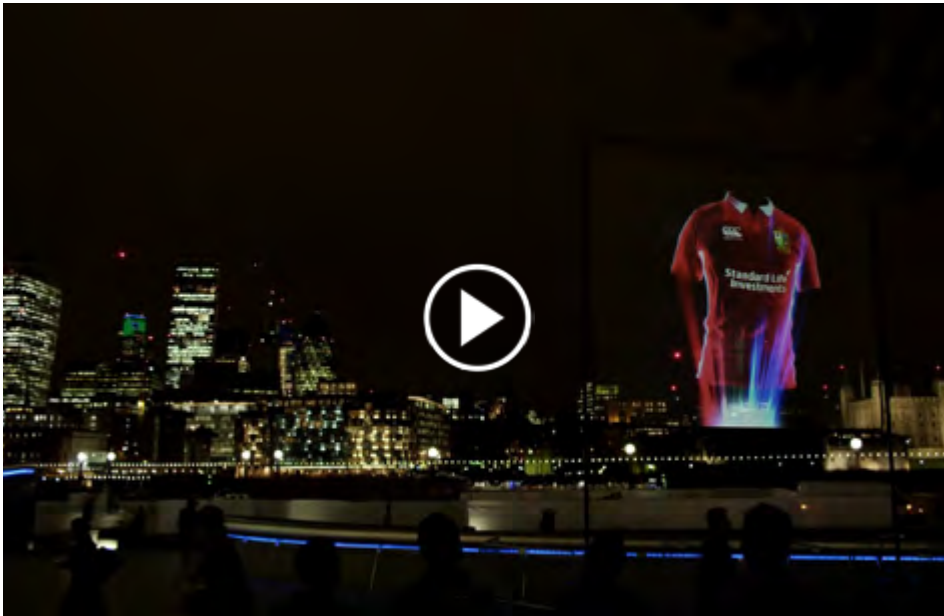




Asics 'Thermographic Print Ad'



Asics 'Fly - Tower Bridge'



Canterbury 'Lions Jersey Launch'



Dick's Sporting Goods 'Keepers'



Nike 'Badge Of Honour'



Nike 'What Will They Think?'

Hummel 'The Great Grass Plantation'



Nike Jordan 'The Playground'





Nike Jordan 'Welcome To The Spotlight'



Nike Jordan 'Why Not 0?'

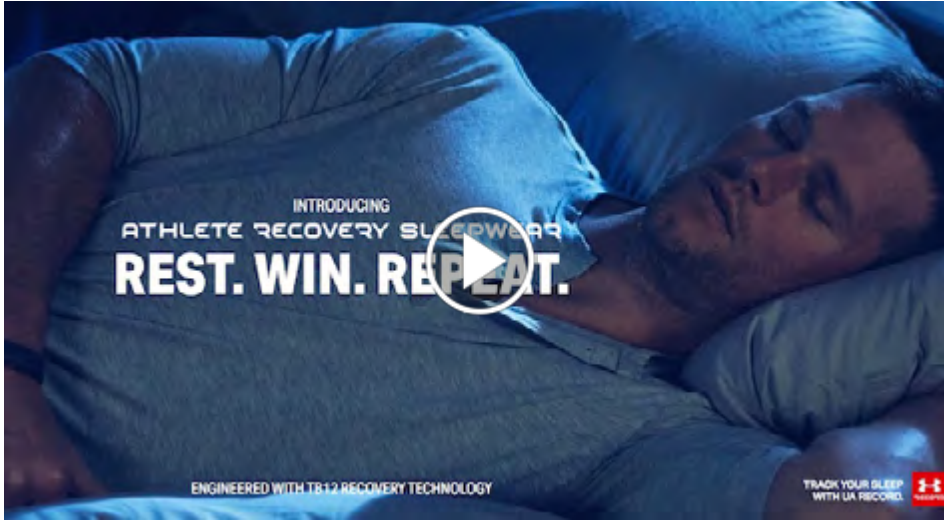
Intersport 'Run The Spring'



Reebok 'Valentine's Day'







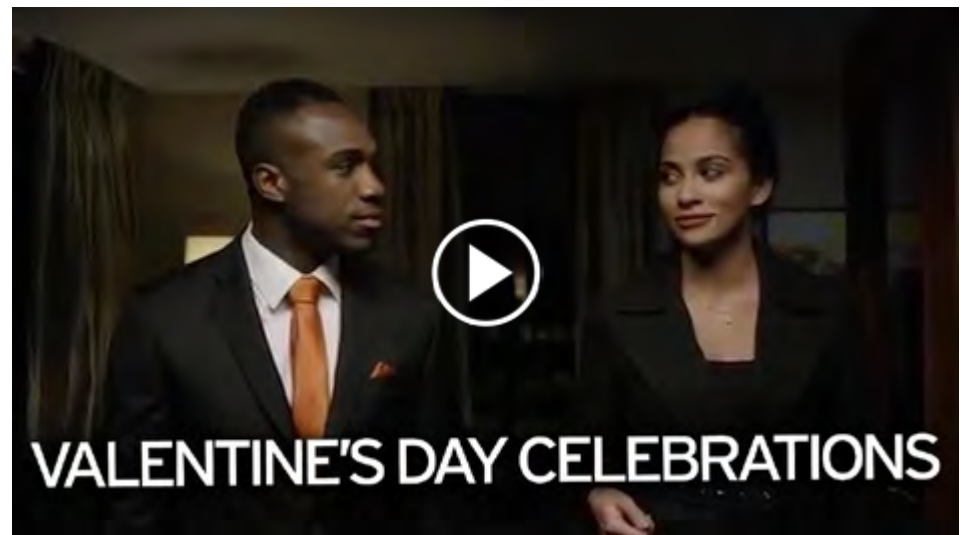
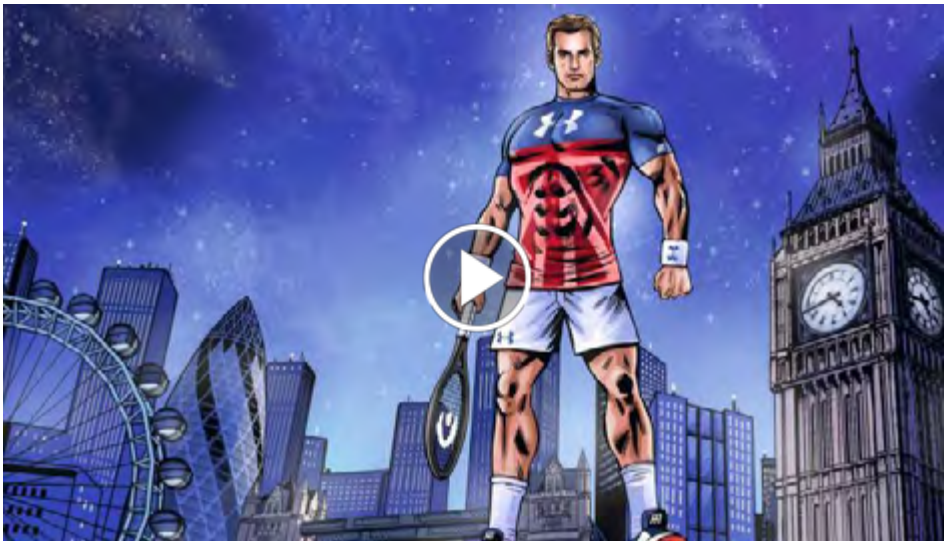
Under Armour 'Sleepwear'



Under Armour 'Murray / Riner'

Under Armour 'Queens'

Umbro 'Valentine's Day'



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