

Snickers Hungerithm wins Media Plan of the Year

AWARDS

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How Snickers Used Social Media Outrage to Fuel the Year's Most Innovative Media Plan

Adweek's Media Plan of the Year honorees include the most innovative media plans from around the world. Here, our Best in Show winner: MediaCom | Mars Chocolates, Hungerithm

Categories:

- Best in Show
- Campaign (\$5-10 million)
- Best Use of Social (\$2 million +)
- Best Use of Data

Beware the dreaded blood-sugar drop and the awful things that can happen as a result. But what if hunger plus anger could somehow become an advantage instead of an albatross?

For the next evolution of Snickers' longtime tagline, "You're not you when you're hungry," MediaCom Melbourne and BBDO linked the public's general irritability—as measured by internet chatter—with the price of Snickers. The more outraged people got online, the cheaper the candy became at Australian 7-Eleven stores.

"It used social sentiment and connected it so simply to a creative idea and a trade proposition, which made the idea a runner," says Simon Sadie, MediaCom's global account director on Mars. "The challenge was how to make it possible."

The campaign took nearly a year to execute from concept to launch, with assists from MIT and Google. The final custom-built algorithm—or "Hungerithm"—was able to analyze 14,000 social posts a day across platforms including Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, even interpreting Aussie slang and sarcasm, to take a virtual fist-shaking temperature of the internet.

The digital- and mobile-led program targeted consumers at particularly hangry moments (traffic jams, crappy weather, political shenanigans), sent them mobile-fed coupons for Snickers, and directed them to the nearest 7-Eleven.

Cheeky TV spots helped launch the program, while programmatic video and other ads focused on additional places of peak potential anger, like between meals, for instance, or after a bruising sports contest. (Sample tagline: "Angry because your team lost to a team that isn't your team?") Real-time reactionary Facebook and Twitter posts addressed breaking news like Brexit, Trump, Game of Thrones spoilers and the Australian federal election.

The promotion updated every 10 minutes—144 times a day in total—leading the price of a Snickers bar to change more than 5,000 times during a five-week period. A brand integration deal put regular price updates on two of the country's top morning shows so

consumers could follow along, which became a national pastime. Consumers were “highly engaged,” says Jane Wakely, CMO of Mars Chocolate at the time. (She is now CMO of the company’s global pet nutrition division.)

Not surprisingly, fans eventually tried to band together and drive down the candy’s price, but there was a cap on the cost. So even boiling-point rage, real or manufactured, didn’t mean free chocolate. While price slashing can be risky in general, Sadie admits, in this case, it “was so strategically on brand for Snickers” and “enhanced people’s understanding of the brand.” A characteristically light touch ensured its entertainment value.

The campaign “managed to create a real-life connection to the product that captured everyone’s attention and imagination,” adds Wakely. “Hungerithm hit the exact digital sweet spot we were going for—the point at which media, content and commerce collide.”

As a result of the campaign, Snickers sales jumped 67 percent, with upwards of 6,600 coupons redeemed. There was a 1,740 percent increase in Facebook traffic and a 120 percent leap in Snickers mentions on Twitter. All told, Hungerithm proved so successful that Snickers is considering a rollout in more markets and possibly the U.S.

[Originally posted in Adweek Media Plan of the Year 2017 issue, cover story and article.](#)

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