LIONS

Community-first creativity

Lessons in collaboration and co-creation

Part 3 of 5 of the **LIONS Creativity Report**,
the ultimate benchmark for impactful creativity



KAMI | DOWN SYNDROME INTERNATIONAL
FORSMAN & BODENFORS, SINGAPORE
SILVER PR LIONS

Talk with, not at, your audience

Reframing audiences as communities enables brands to develop deeper, more conversational relationships with consumers. As Kenny Gold, Head of Social, Content and Influencer at Deloitte Digital, said at the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity 2023: “Marketers should be listening to audiences, understanding what’s important to them and ensuring that content is being built from that momentum from the middle out.”

This report offers tips and techniques for brands on how to build robust relationships with their audiences. Discover how to become part of gaming fandoms in a natural and non-obtrusive way. Improve brand experiences for everyone by committing to inclusivity. Use co-creation to build loyalty among ad-avoidant Gen Zers. This is particularly important given that nearly half (48%) of Gen Z consumers actively want to engage with brands on platforms such as TikTok to influence product innovation, according to Euromonitor. As Gen Z accounts for one quarter of the global population, brands must find relevant ways to talk with them, not at them.

48%

of Gen Z consumers want to engage with brands to influence product innovation

Source: Euromonitor International Voice of the Consumer Survey. Lifestyles Survey 2022

Takeaways

Lion winners offer three ways to build and sustain trusting relationships with communities.

1

Turn gaming communities into brand advocates

Meet the diverse needs of specific gaming communities and consider how you can add value beyond pushing a brand message. Use the Entertainment Lions for Gaming Grand Prix winner ‘Clash of Clans’ as a reference point.

2

Look beyond obvious sources of influence

Work with creators to drive trust. Find people with an organic attachment to your brand and don’t let vanity metrics cloud your judgement. Learn from the ‘Michelob Guy’: the most influential figures might not have the highest follower count, but quality of engagement can trump quantity.

3

Support inclusive work with commitment

Shortlisted work that referenced inclusion rose by 33% in 2023 vs 2022. Consider how your work can make it easy for partners to drive inclusion, as adidas did with ‘Runner 321’.



CLASH OF CLANS | CLASH FROM THE PAST
WIEDEN+KENNEDY, PORTLAND
GRAND PRIX ENTERTAINMENT LIONS FOR GAMING



KAMI | DOWN SYNDROME INTERNATIONAL
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SILVER PR LIONS



INEQUALITY YOU CAN’T IGNORE | THE CHRYSALIS INITIATIVE
EVERSANA INTOUCH, NEW YORK
GOLD PHARMA LIONS

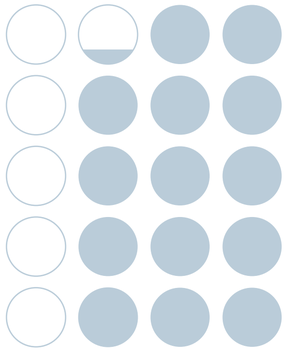
1 Turn gaming communities into brand advocates

Listen to players, invite them to participate and collaborate with them. Successful work in the inaugural Entertainment Lions for Gaming showed how to truly enhance play or the experience around it.

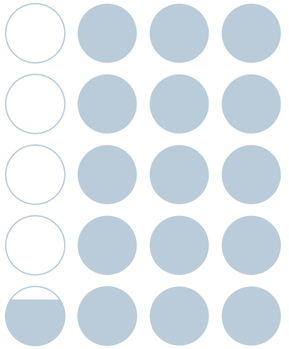
As 2023 Jury President Francine Li, Global Head of Marketing at Riot Games, says: “Gaming companies don’t exclusively own games; they are co-owned by the community. Players are so passionate. When you’re able to tap that passion in a positive way, they’ll be your biggest advocate.”

Entertainment Lions for Gaming 2023: mentions of community / communities

71% **of shortlists in the Entertainment Lions for Gaming were community-related**



77% **of Awards in the Entertainment Lions for Gaming were community-related**



Cannes Lions 2023, entries with “community” or “communities” in their synopsis

Build a branded universe: ‘Clash from the Past’

Clash of Clans celebrated its 10th anniversary by inviting fans into an alternate reality where the mobile game had existed since 1982. The nostalgic campaign featured a 20-minute documentary detailing the game’s fake origin story, alongside a rabbit hole of faux brand deals and exclusive content that anchored the game in the past.

Brand sentiment skyrocketed, with the campaign video trending at number 1 on YouTube. A cereal created in partnership with General Mills sold out, and limited-edition trading cards resold for $2000 on eBay.

Francine Li, Global Head of Marketing at Riot Games and Jury President of the Entertainment Lions for Gaming 2023, said: “Players don’t just love games, they love the universe around them. This brave idea turned the typical game anniversary celebration on its head with depth and authenticity. It resonated with the player community and drove profound brand love.”

Takeaway:

Invest in worldbuilding.
Give players opportunities to enjoy the game beyond gameplay and look for different touchpoints to tell your story.

CLASH FROM THE PAST



Play with the players

These three Lion winners show how to maximise cross-collaboration opportunities with the player community by engaging audiences with in-game challenges.

MISSION: WHOPPER | BURGER KING



DAVID, SÃO PAULO — SILVER SOCIAL & INFLUENCER LIONS

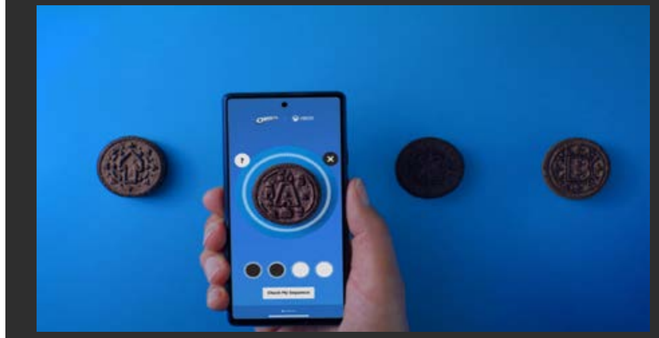
Burger King
‘Mission: Whopper’

Burger King challenged gamers to change their nicknames to Whopper ingredients and work together to build the burger on the Call of Duty scoreboard. More than 40,000 winning squads claimed Whopper coupons, with some players recreating the challenge within other games. Burger King’s online sales grew by 28%.

Mondelēz Europe
‘Oreo Cheat Cookies’

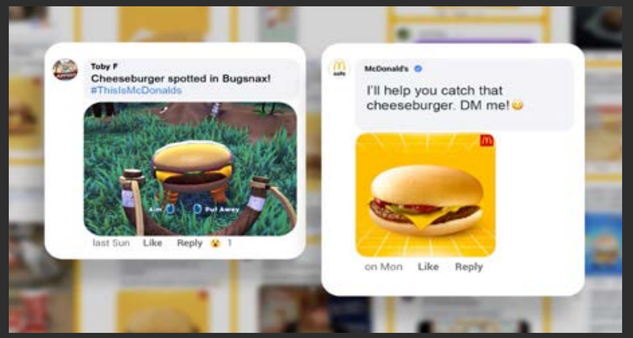
Partnering with Xbox, Oreo embossed its cookies to resemble game controller buttons and invited players to identify ‘cheat codes’. By scanning different cookie combinations, players unlocked more than 827,000 in-game features, and Oreo achieved 8.6% growth across Europe.

OREO CHEAT COOKIES | MONDELĒZ EUROPE



SAATCHI & SAATCHI, DÜSSELDORF — GOLD DIRECT LIONS

UNBRANDED MENU | MCDONALD’S



LEO BURNETT, MANILA — SILVER ENTERTAINMENT LIONS FOR GAMING

McDonald’s
‘Unbranded Menu’

McDonald’s used the gaming community’s fondness for ‘screen grabbing’ to claim fast food lookalikes across the gaming multiverse. By rewarding gamers with real versions of their digital finds, it increased brand engagement by 140% and McDelivery sales by 35%.

2 Look beyond obvious sources of influence

"The creator economy comes from a bedroom that others can see themselves in. That's why it's so successful," said Ashley Rudder, Chief Creator Officer at creator commerce company Whalar, at the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity 2023.

This section shows how the sphere of influence is evolving in response to a demand for greater authenticity and transparency, with brands turning to everyday people or widespread co-creation to access specific communities.

The creator economy is valued at

$102 billion

The creator economy has grown by

$165 million

in the past two years (as of May 2023)

Source: WARC

Everyday ambassadors: ‘Michelob Guy’

When a Tiger Woods fan attracted attention for holding a can of Michelob ULTRA instead of a smartphone, the beer producer moved fast.

‘Michelob Guy’ was given his own commercial, signed to a merchandise deal and sent on a press tour – turning him into the official spokesperson for the brand’s ‘It’s only worth it if you enjoy it’ message.

‘Michelob Guy’ helped Michelob ULTRA gain 250m PR impressions and 30k organic social mentions, as well as its highest-grossing merch of 2022.

Takeaway:

Follow the fans.
Listen out for organic conversations around your brand and act quickly to champion a supporter.

MICHELOB GUY



MICHELOB GUY | AB INBEV – MICHELOB ULTRA
MICHELOB ULTRA, NEW YORK
SILVER SOCIAL & INFLUENCER LIONS

Power to the people

At the Cannes Lions Festival of Creativity 2023, Mobbie Nazir, Global Chief Strategy Officer at We Are Social, described a movement “towards more anonymous and collective influence”. These four Lion winners show this shift towards widespread co-creation in action.

#OPTINK | JUNGE HELDEN E.V.



MCCANN, PARIS — GOLD SOCIAL & INFLUENCER LIONS

#OPTINK

Organ donation centre Junge Helden recruited tattoo artists as influencers, offering ink enthusiasts free matching tattoos to opt in for organ donation. Launched at tattoo conventions, it inspired more than 3000 donors and lifted the centre’s social media following by 100%.

I’M NEALE DANIHER | FIGHTMND

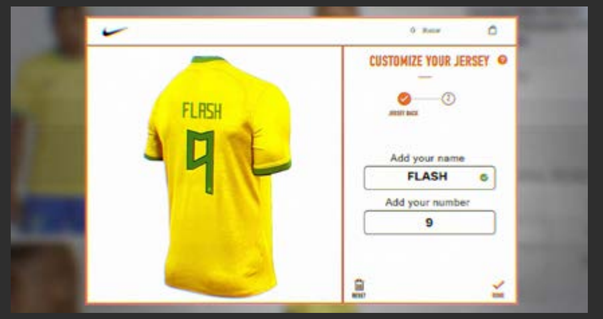


CLEMENGER BBDO, SYDNEY — SILVER SOCIAL & INFLUENCER LIONS

I’m Neale Daniher

When retired AFL footballer and motor neurone disease spokesman Neale Daniher lost his voice to the disease, FightMND used TikTok’s duet feature to invite Australians to dictate his speech on his behalf. The video became TikTok’s number 1 user-generated content (UGC) that month, raising a record-breaking $19.8m for FightMND.

CASHBACK FOR YOUR JERSEY’S BACK | FLASH



FCB BRASIL, SÃO PAULO — GOLD SOCIAL & INFLUENCER LIONS

Cashback For Your Jersey’s Back

Benefit card Flash invited Brazilian football fans to customise their national team jersey with its name and post a picture in exchange for a 50% refund. More than 3273 consumers became Flash sponsors, boosting brand mentions by 2300%.

KAMI | DOWN SYNDROME INTERNATIONAL



FORSMAN & BODENFORS, SINGAPORE — SILVER PR LIONS

Kami

Kami, the first verified virtual influencer with Down syndrome, was created and is controlled by 100 women from the community she represents. Kami demonstrates a more inclusive model for running influencers, used as an example of best practice in Meta’s ‘Ethics of Virtual Influencers’ guidelines.

3 Support inclusive work with commitment

To demonstrate true allyship, complement inclusive work with long-term commitment. Go even further by pushing partners and other organisations to create work that is representative of the real world.

As Andy Kraut, Senior Brand Partnerships Executive at Grindr, advised during the Cannes Lions 2023 session 'Strange Bedfellows: How Officials and Grindr Made Monkeypox Education "Viral"': "Ask yourself a serious question: why do I want to reach the gay community? Is it because they have more money in this vertical? Is it because we have real sympathy for their plea? Figure out what that means to the company and why, and then see if that's being reflected in how you practise internally."

Mentions of inclusion: All Cannes Lions entries 2023 vs 2022

ENTRIES	▲72%
SHORTLISTS	▲50%
AWARDS	▲17%

Cannes Lions 2023 vs 2022, entries with "inclusion" in their synopsis

Extend assistive technologies: ‘MouthPad^’

Hardware startup Augmental’s smart teeth retainer translates tongue movements into clicks, offering individuals with limited mobility a new way to control electronics with accuracy.

In one week, the hands-free interface received more than 1000 pre-orders, prompting a 6000% rise in Augmental’s website traffic.

“This is not just for people with a disability,” said Grace Francis, Global Chief Creative and Design Officer, WongDoody, and Innovation Lions Jury President 2023. “It also has applications for surgeons who have their hands full and can use ‘MouthPad^’ to control a screen. We think about it as holistic, assistive tech for the disabled, but it has applications for all of us.”

Takeaway:

Solve a problem for a specific community, then consider how it can benefit other groups.

MOUTHPAD^



MOUTHPAD^ | AUGMENTAL
WUNDERMAN THOMPSON, LIMA
GRAND PRIX INNOVATION LIONS

Exercise allyship

These three Lion winners support specific communities and hold other organisations accountable too.

INEQUALITY YOU CAN'T IGNORE | THE CHRYSALIS INITIATIVE



EVERSANA INTOUCH, NEW YORK — GOLD PHARMA LIONS

The Chrysalis Initiative
'Inequality you can't ignore'

This used augmented reality (AR), storytelling and localised media placement to urge healthcare providers to recognise racial inequalities in breast cancer care. Despite initially facing dismissal, it inspired 27 US hospitals to add unconscious bias training to their curricula.

Capaxia
'Rainbow Washing Detector'

To expose rainbow washing, i.e. the superficial use of LGBTQ+ symbols, consulting firm Capaxia launched an open-source tool that measures companies' true commitment to the community. The app offers real-time data on more than 3000 brands and has been downloaded by more than 50,000 people in Mexico.

RAINBOW WASHING DETECTOR | CAPAXIA



DDB MEXICO, MEXICO CITY — BRONZE MOBILE LIONS

RUNNER 321 | ADIDAS



FCB TORONTO — GRAND PRIX DIRECT LIONS

adidas
'Runner 321'

Sponsoring Chris Nikic, its first athlete with Down syndrome, adidas called on every major marathon to hold the number 321 bib to encourage visibility. It prompted 252 races, including all six of the world's largest marathons, to reserve a space for neurodivergent athletes.

How it got made

‘Runner 321’:

FCB Toronto’s **Andrew MacPhee**, Executive Creative Director, and **Sara Radovanovich**, Associate Creative Director and Senior Copywriter, talk about how ‘Runner 321’ became a bigger idea when people started to champion it

What was the brief?

AM: We were already working with Chris Nikic and the Canadian Down Syndrome Society. From there, we introduced Chris to adidas, which resulted in him becoming the first person with Down syndrome to be sponsored by the brand. Chris was already geared up to run the Boston Marathon, so adidas asked us to create some social content around that endeavour. We decided there was a bigger opportunity there; something that was PR-driven and impactful.

How did everything come together?

SR: It started with 321. We knew we wanted to make this number something the community could aspire to. From there, we created the film to get the community excited. Once that happened, people started approaching these races and saying, “I want to wear 321, I want to represent my community.” We designed a toolkit to make it super easy for race directors to respond.

A lot of the major races aren’t associated with adidas. Were you confident that you were going to be able to get them on board?

AM: There was a bit of an ‘uh oh’ moment when we remembered that other major races have sponsors that are direct competitors. But at its core, ‘Runner 321’ is about inclusivity, and inclusivity is what’s right for the world. That reassured us because at the end of the day, if you said no to Runner 321, you weren’t saying no to adidas, you were saying no to inclusion. We just didn’t see people doing that.

What’s next for this piece?

SR: Chris told us that growing up, he didn’t see anyone like him in mainstream sports, and that was a barrier. Our goal is that this community will never not see themselves represented in a race. Making it super easy for the races to participate was definitely a challenge, but getting the community to participate was not a challenge at all. They were so inspired. The power of representation was amazing to see.

What did you learn from this piece?

AM: An idea that resonates with people will take on a life of its own. We did the heavy lifting upfront, but it’s the people that got involved and championed it that made it live.

“An idea that resonates with people will take on a life of its own”

RUNNER 321 | ADIDAS



FCB TORONTO **GRAND PRIX DIRECT LIONS**



"Audiences can sniff out whether something is an integral belief of a brand. The democratisation of sport is something that adidas has consistently funded and supported. It's an idea that isn't self-serving and has an incredible generosity of spirit."

CHAKA SOBHANI

GLOBAL CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER I LEO BURNETT WORLDWIDE
JURY PRESIDENT I DIRECT LIONS
2023

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