Powered by

LIONS | THE WORK

LIONS Creativity Report

4 -Mastering Virtual Worlds

A series of reports investigating themes from the 2020-2021 Cannes Lions winners





At LIONS,

we have built up 65 years of evidence showing how creative excellence progresses people, business and society.

Cannes Lions - The International Festival of Creativity - is a global destination, with a Lion being the definitive benchmark for creativity that drives progress.

This is the fourth edition in a series of reports that offers insights into the themes that our juries spotted among this year's Lions winners so that you, as a subscriber to The Work, can start considering them in the context of your own work.

In September 2021, we will publish the seventh edition of the LIONS Creativity Report that will include rankings and data, alongside trends and themes from this year's Lion-winners.

Gaming cultures build and thrive

Given the growth of gaming and time spent in virtual worlds over the last 18 months, it's no surprise that 13% of Grands Prix awarded at Cannes Lions 2020-2021 had a gaming or gamification component, up from 8% in 2019.

Gaming was a new category within the Direct Lions this year, attracting 50 pieces of work, including the Grand Prix-winner, Burger King's 'Stevenage Challenge' by DAVID Madrid and Miami.

In the Social and Influencer Lions, 38% of the winning work successfully connected brands to culture, often by hijacking the popularity of a viral meme, trending show or gaming platform.

'Super Wendy's World' by VMLY&R Kansas City was a prime example: the fast food restaurant chain's red-plaited brand mascot became a regular on Twitch as she played the games that are important to Wendy's heartland audience. It showed that Wendy's knew that these games are far more than distraction: they are virtual worlds, with communities, loyal followings and entire sub-cultures that need to be understood by the brands wanting to be a part of them.

2021

WENDY'S | SUPER WENDY'S WORLD



GOLD SOCIAL & INFLUENCER LIONS

VMLY&R KANSAS CITY

Gaming cultures build and thrive

The pandemic provided ample opportunity for virtual worlds to step up, as appointment-to-view digital events aimed to replicate real world ones that had been cancelled. Verizon used Fortnite to recreate the Super Bowl stadium experience for 40 million sports fans. Pride Month used Nintendo's Animal Crossing: New Horizons as a safe platform for its June 2020 event. Xbox enabled us to travel remotely by teaming up with Rough Guides and repositioning its hardware as a passport to fascinating new places.

This report brings together insights from some of the most successful ventures into virtual worlds. It aims to show you what you can learn from different Lion-winning approaches.

2020

XBOX | THE BIRTH OF GAMING TOURISM



GOLD DIRECT LIONS

MCCANN LONDON

How to master virtual worlds

Many 2020-2021 Lions winners show how to use virtual worlds to deliver a strong brand experience or message. Consider how takeouts from those winners could be applied to your brands.

1 Be patient

Ideas that involve virtual worlds can take a long time to generate results. Build in time for audiences to play around with your idea, enabling it to build reach and make an impact.

2 Make it must-see

'Astronomical' showed how to make an appointment-to-view event on a gaming platform, as well as how to integrate brands in a non-interruptive way. Consider how you could develop this kind of content within a virtual world to create a buzz around your brand.

3 Make a stand against cyberbullying

Accompanying the growth in gaming has been a rise in cyberbullying. Think about what your brand could do to help victims in a specific way, like Samsung did by giving away a Fortnite skin for 'default' players.

4 Differentiate on Twitch

Esports are pulling in audiences in their millions, primarily on Twitch. But as Twitch partnerships become commonplace, find a way to differentiate so your reason for being there is clear to the audience.

BE PATIENT

1

Be patient

FIFA 2020 football team scores for Burger King

2021

BURGER KING | #STEVENAGECHALLENGE



GRAND PRIX DIRECT LIONS

DAVID MADRID DAVID MIAMI

Challenger QSR chain Burger King sponsored an underdog UK football team languishing at the bottom of the league. However, with time and trust in the gaming community to get behind the idea, it paid dividends.

Burger King sponsored Stevenage FC in June 2019, knowing that if Burger King logos graced Stevenage shirts in real life, they would also appear in FIFA 20, the most significant and popular game franchise in the world.

'#StevenageChallenge' invited gamers to play with Stevenage and share user-generated content from the likes of Messi, Cristiano Ronaldo, Mbappé, Neymar and other superstars scoring goals while sporting the Burger King logo on their shirts. In return, they were gifted rewards on the Burger King app which they could redeem in-store.

Debbi Vandeven, Global Chief Creative Officer, VMLY&R and Jury President for the Social & Influencer Lions, said: "It was all mixed, playing from social to gaming platforms to real world. That's going to become more important."

#STEVENAGECHALLENGE

Winner's View:

Pancho Cassis on Burger King's #StevenageChallenge



PANCHO CASSIS

GLOBAL CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER & PARTNER | DAVID

Winner of 11 Cannes Lions, including three Grands Prix in Direct, Brand Experience & Entertainment and Social & Influencer

"Gaming ideas develop at a different pace from normal ideas... you need to be patient to make the whole thing unfold and reach people."

MAKE IT MUST-SEE

2

Make it must-see

Fortnite Astronomical

2020

FORTNITE | ASTRONOMICAL



GRAND PRIX DIGITAL CRAFT LIONS

EPIC GAMES INC CARY

Fortnite's partnership with US rapper Travis Scott helped to reposition Fortnite as a social platform offering huge, global reach for culturally significant, entertaining moments.

Some 12.3 million players tuned in live; a total of 27.7 million unique players in-game participated 45.8 million times across five events.

Digital Craft Lions Jury President Jax Ostle-Evans said: "This is iconic and it hit the numbers. Teenagers were at home with nothing to do during lockdown and this was an entertainment spectacle to inspire them."

ASTRONOMICAL

The Jury President View:
Jax Ostle-Evans



JAX OSTLE-EVANS
MANAGING DIRECTOR | STINK STUDIOS
JURY PRESIDENT | DIGITAL CRAFT

"Astronomical was a world that everyone wanted to spend time in. The digital craft is incredible and the creative is first-class."

Fortnite Partnerships 2019-2021

2019



'Keeping Fortnite Fresh' for Wendy's by VMLY&R Kansas City wins the Grand Prix for the Social & Influencer Lions. The activation saw the brand's red-plaited mascot smash up Fortnite's freezers to reinforce that Wendy's uses only fresh beef in its burgers.

2020



Having attracted millions of eyeballs, 'Astronomical', a Fortnite concert by Epic Games Inc Cary, starring rapper Travis Scott, wins the Digital Craft Lions Grand Prix.

2020



Association L'Enfant Bleu's 'Undercover Avatar' by Havas Sports & Entertainment Paris offers a parent-free way for at-risk kids to speak up. Year-on-year donations rose by 30%.

2021



Verizon's 'Fortnite Stadium' by R/GA New York built a 5G stadium within Fortnite so that 40 million fans could come together for the Super Bowl despite lockdowns.

MAKE A STAND AGAINST CYBERBULLYING

3

Make a stand against cyberbullying

Samsung supports less affluent Fortnite players

As the population in virtual worlds continues to grow and they become increasingly normalised as social platforms for children and teens, brands are beginning to encourage more responsible behaviour, particularly in combating cyberbullying.

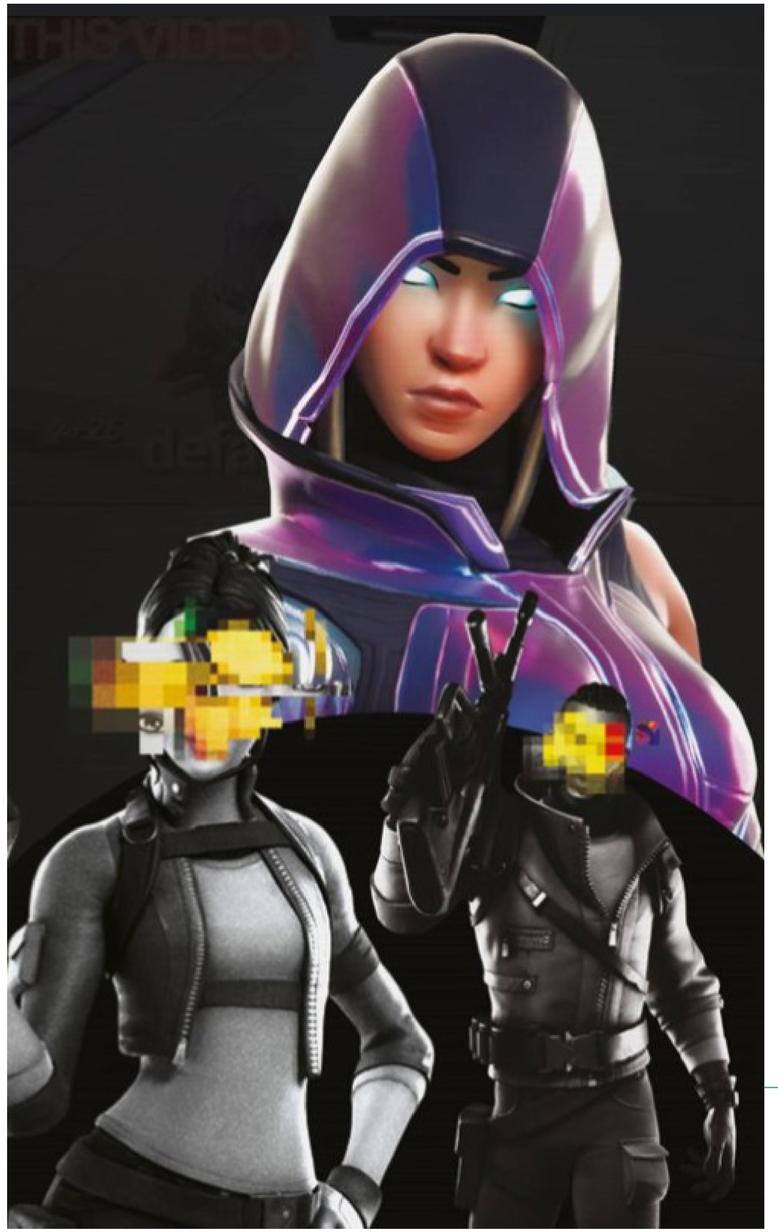
Samsung's 'Anti Bullying Skin' aimed to prevent less affluent Fortnite gamers from being picked on for using the free 'default' skin. The tech brand gave the skin away with Galaxy devices and encouraged owners and influencers to donate them to Fortnite players using the default skin.

French not-for-profit organisation Association L'Enfant Bleu also used Fortnite for its 'Undercover Avatar', an in-game character to help children at risk of violence and abuse to speak up in confidence and in a parent-free zone.

ANTI-BULLYING SKIN

2020

SAMSUNG | ANTI-BULLYING SKIN



SILVER MEDIA LIONS

CHEIL WORLDWIDE SAO PAULO



GERRY D'ANGELO

VP GLOBAL MEDIA | PROCTER & GAMBLE
MEDIA LIONS JUROR

"For a long time, advertising in gaming has been interstitials and pre-rolls to win extras on Candy Crush. What a lot of these brands did is achieve the most incredibly sensitive adaptation to the environment."

DIFFERENTIATE ON TWITCH

4

Differentiate on Twitch

Tournament engages young hemophiliacs

Roche-owned US biotechnology corporation Genentech found a novel way to engage young hemophiliac men through a Twitch partnership and offer them information and support.

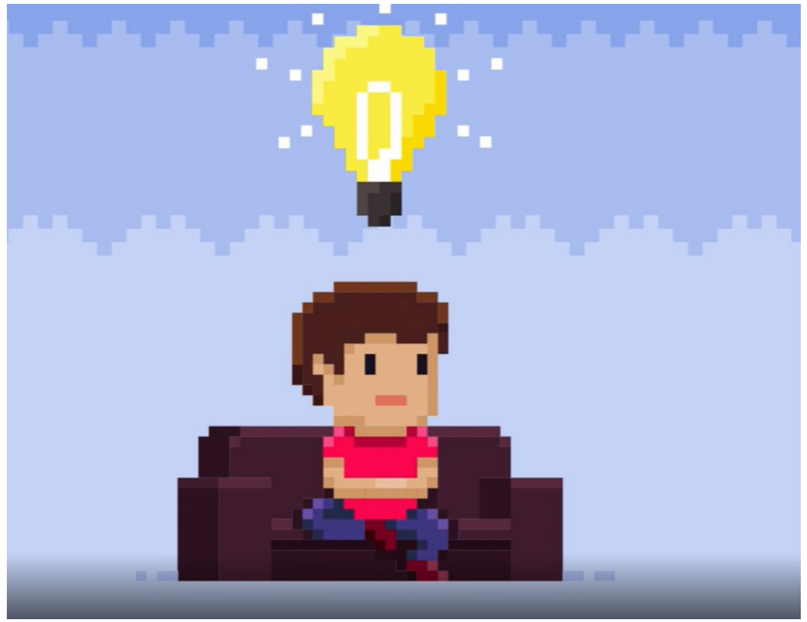
It took out the blood from shoot ‘em up games in a customised tournament called The Bloodless Battle on Twitch Rivals, a regular fixture on the esports platform. Hemophiliac gamers took on some of the biggest names in esports.

Removing the blood from popular video games prompted a five-fold increase in unique traffic to the Genentech Hemophilia website.

BLOODLESS BATTLE

2021

GENENTECH | BLOODLESS BATTLE



SILVER PHARMA LIONS

21 GRAMS A PART OF REAL CHEMISTRY NEW YORK

Powered by

LIONS | THE WORK

LIONS Creativity Report

The leading global resource for benchmarking, creativity and effectiveness

This is part of a series of reports leading up to the launch of the Lions Creativity Report at
LIONS Decoded: Behind the Winning Ideas on 17 September.
As a subscriber to The Work, you have exclusive access to these reports and to this year's data.