

Using Labels and Accessories as Creative Advertising Media: Insights from Cannes Lions 2017



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Opinion

Creativity is a powerful force for driving social change. Brands and consumers are increasingly aware of the ability of creativity to change peoples' attitudes and behaviours. In communications, creativity can increase the effectiveness of a message, help brands break through a cluttered media environment and reach increasingly fragmented audiences. In the search for creative ways to communicate with consumers, brands have been exploring new techniques to deliver their messages, with some for example using labels and accessories as a tangible 'media' to communicate with consumers and drive attitudinal and behavioural change.

While creativity is synonymous with the textile industry, using labels and accessories to carry messages and deliver social change is a nascent use. This article explores the evidence from The 2017 Cannes Lions Festival of Creativity and discusses how labels and accessories are being incorporated as media within some of the world's most creative marketing communications campaigns to improve the lives of women in India and infants in Afghanistan.

The Cannes Lions Festival, held on the Mediterranean coast of France every year, showcases the best creative work from around the globe. The festival highlights many of the novel ways in which organisations are reaching audiences and awards the best creative work with Lions. These awards are the most coveted global awards for creativity in the marketing communications industry. In 2017, two of the award-winning campaigns featured labels and accessories as a 'media' and demonstrated how creativity is being used to drive social change [1].

The first of these award winners was the campaign for Ariel, Share The Load. This was an integrated marketing communications campaign developed by P&G India and their advertising agency BBDO India to drive social change in India. The campaigns' objectives were to change existing gendered attitudes towards clothes washing and get more men to help with the household washing. In a country where washing has traditionally been seen as the job of a woman, the campaign ignited a debate and social movement to change societal norms.

The campaign developed a new symbol for the wash label and this was placed alongside the regular washing instructions. The wording, "CAN BE WASHED BY BOTH MEN AND WOMEN #Share The Load", appeared next to the symbol on the wash care label. The labels were adopted by several leading clothing fashion brands in India, including Amazon, American Crew, Flip kart, Jabong, Shoppers Stop and Masabi. Using the garments themselves to communicate the message, alongside traditional communication tools, was novel and helped to generate social media interest and debate. In particular, #Share The Load activated a discussion on social media platforms, demonstrating that when relevant, labels and accessories can be a creative vehicle to deliver messages to consumers [1].

The Ministry of Public Health in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and McCANN India used an accessory to deliver their message in an innovative campaign, The Immunity Charm. Winning a Lion at the festival, the Ministry of Public Health used charm bracelets as part of their campaign to improve awareness of vaccinations among infants in the country. With a vaccination completion rate of only 50% and poor literacy rates in the rural areas of the country, finding an effective media to educate and inform parents about childhood vaccinations was a challenge. The idea for using a charm bracelet came from the Afghan tradition of tying a bracelet onto small children to ward off evil spirits. The campaign built on this tradition and used bracelets with coloured beads. Each bead was coloured to represent a different vaccination and allowed parents and doctors to see what vaccines the infant had received. As well as keeping a record of the child's immunisation record, the immunity charm bracelet engaged parents in the vaccination programme. This campaign is a good example of how an accessory can be used as a vehicle to carry messages and can help to bring about social change [1].

In the cases of Share The Load and The Immunity Charm, labels and accessories were chosen as an alternative to other more traditional media forms, such as TV, radio or press. The advantage of using labels and accessories is that have a physical presence and longevity. This means that it is harder to ignore them and the opportunities to see them are increased. Opportunities

To See (OTS) is an important consideration for brands when planning media choices, as it measures the reach of the media vehicle [2]. Unlike other forms of media, such as television or radio ads which typically appear for 30 or 60 seconds, labels and accessories have a considerably longer life. In a cluttered media environment, where it is challenging to reach audiences, labels and accessories can provide a cost-effective, alternative channel for brand owners and organisations to build relationships with audiences.

Developing marketing communications campaigns that are creative and effective is challenging [3]. Campaigns such as Share The Load and The Immunity Charm highlight how labels and accessories can be used as part of an integrated campaign to deliver engaging messages through a novel medium. The

cases discussed in this paper provide an illustration of how such campaigns have been developed for social causes to improve the lives of consumers, as well as provide commercial benefits for brands. Given the increase in the number of media channels, both on and offline, it is likely that organisations will explore using alternative forms of media, such as labels and accessories in the future.

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