



# GRAND PRIX INSIGHTS

Strategy interviews with the teams behind some of the most celebrated campaigns from the 2024 Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity



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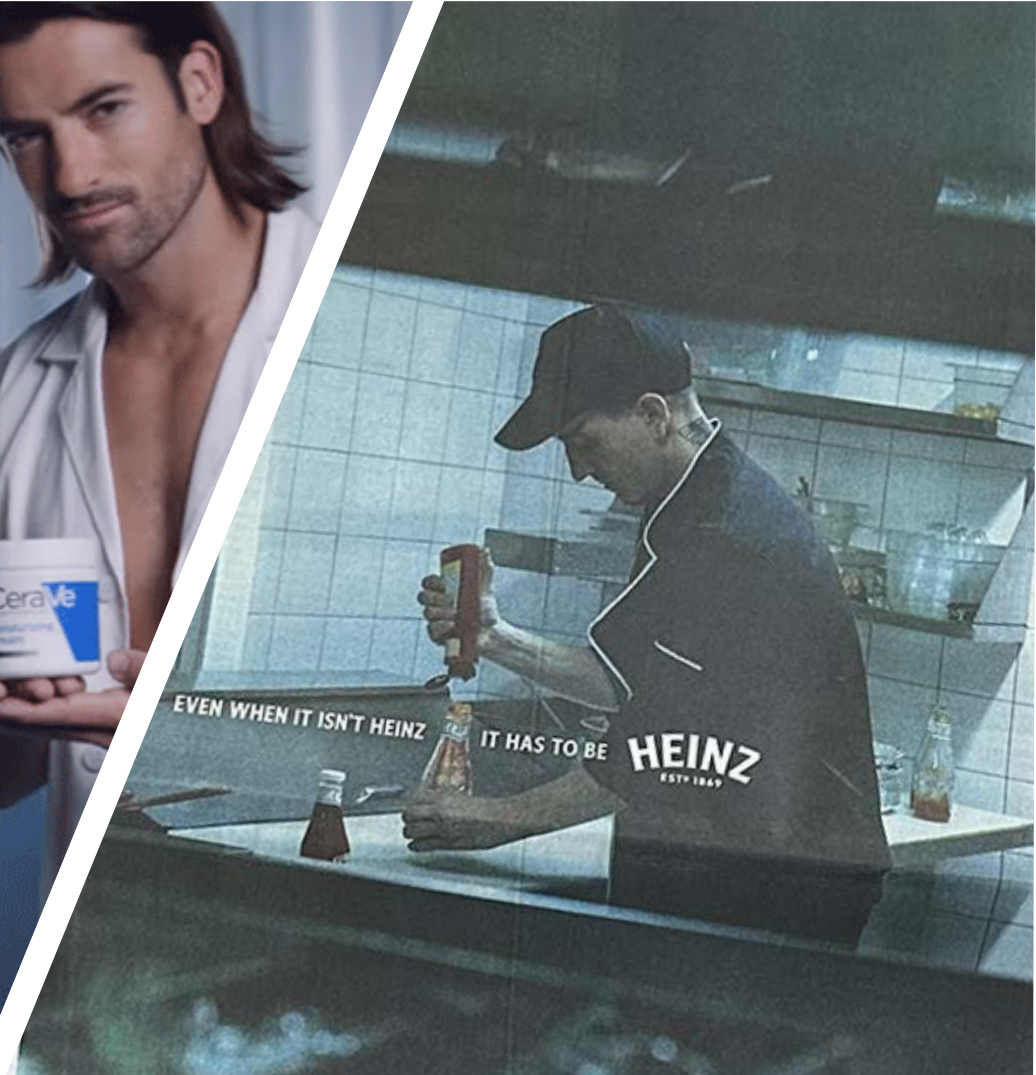
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# WoMen's Football

How a telco drummed up support for the team it was sponsoring by encouraging people to question their assumptions about women's football

In June 2023, Orange created a campaign to highlight the talent of the women's French national football team (which the telco sponsors) — and women's football in general — ahead of the Fifa World Cup.

The WoMen's Football campaign, created by Marcel, Paris, uses the highlight reel format beloved by football fans. At first, it appears to be a standard sizzle reel of match highlights from the men's French team, aka Le Bleus, featuring stars such as Kylian Mbappé and Antoine Griezmann. But halfway through the ad, there's a reveal: the players in the ad are in fact female French national team players, altered to look like their male counterparts using visual effects. As the ad reads, 'Only Les Bleus can give us these emotions. But that's not them you've just seen.'

The spot ends with the message, 'At Orange, when we support Les Bleus, we support Les Bleues', which encompasses both the masculine and feminine spellings of the word.

According to the agency, the ad was viewed over 200 million times, generated 450 articles in 91 countries and was mentioned during prime-time TV news. It was also shared on social media by the French Minister of Sports, and by World Cup-winning athletes.



To find out more about the campaign, Contagious spoke with Marcel CSO Ghislain Tenneson, and Orange head of advertising and retail communication Quentin Delobelle.

## Give us an overview of Orange's position in the French market and how it has evolved over the last few years.

**Quentin Delobelle:** Orange started in the UK in 1994. It is also the telco leader in France, where it has 22 million customers

in the mobile market, 12 million broadband customers, and a turnover of €18bn [\$19.8bn]. We are positioned on quality, and we've been ranked first amongst a list of mobile networks 12 times in a row. This point around quality is very important because the French telco market is very competitive. We've got four major operators and plenty of sub-brands and mobile virtual network operators that are very competitive, with very low prices. Nevertheless, Orange's positioning as the top quality provider has allowed it

to maintain its market leadership for years.

## Who is Orange's target audience? Has this changed or remained consistent?

**Delobelle:** As the market leader, our audience is wide. We are historically strong in the family segment and popular with individuals with high socioeconomic status. At the moment, we are focusing on targeting specifically a young, active and urban demographic, which is inundated with brand offerings.

## What are Orange's current business challenges?

**Delobelle:** We want to maintain our leadership both on the mobile and broadband markets while developing a good level of value.

## Tell us about the client relationship – how long has Marcel worked with Orange?

**Ghislain Tenneson:** Orange is an important client for the Publicis Groupe in general, and for Marcel. We've been working together for over 12 years. That gave us time to develop a trustful relationship, which I think is really important to bring this type of idea to life. It's hard to develop bold ideas if you don't have mutual trust. I think the quality of our relationship played a huge part in this campaign's success.

**'It's hard to develop bold ideas if you don't have mutual trust. I think the quality of our relationship played a huge part in this campaign's success'**

Ghislain Tenneson, Marcel, Paris

## Tell us about Orange's sponsorship of Les Bleues.

**Delobelle:** Orange has been supporting French football for years. The first club we supported was Lens, in the north of France. Now, we sponsor big clubs like Paris Saint-Germain, l'Olympique Lyonnais and l'Olympique de Marseille. And for five years, we've been a major partner of the French Football Federation, which includes both men's and women's national teams.

## Why was it important to be vocal about Orange's support of women's football?

**Delobelle:** Because women's football is underestimated. Working on equality and diversity is a core value for Orange. Our CEO, Christel Heydemann, is a woman, which is still very rare in France. There aren't many women CEOs in the CAC 40 [the benchmark French stock market index, made up of the 40 biggest companies listed in France]. As we are a major partner of the French Federation, it was important for Orange to voice its support of the national women's team as much as we do the men's team.

**Tenneson:** Plus, we have a pretty competitive team! The Women's World Cup in 2019 marked a tipping point in the recognition of women's football in France. The market reached a new level of maturity in terms of awareness – even if there are still a lot of biases to tackle. This context made the Women's World Cup a great opportunity to assert Orange's strong long-term commitment to football at large.



## Tell us about the brief. What was the challenge? What were the key business objectives?

**Tenneson:** The main objective and challenge was to show support for football, whatever the context and the difficulty we face. The challenge was growing excitement for the Women's World Cup. To give you an idea of how far we've come, I can tell you that the tournament didn't even have a French broadcaster until just a few weeks ago. The popularity of the competition was not a given at all, especially as the World Cup takes place very far from France. The time difference doesn't help.

This is where Orange stepped in and said:

we support Les Bleues at the same level as Les Bleus and we want the same level of engagement and popularity for both teams. Obviously, this drives perceptions of Orange as an engaging, genuine and responsible brand, connected to what's happening in France and worldwide.

## Did you set out effectiveness metrics beforehand?

**Tenneson:** We're trying to look at whether we are reaching the same amount of people with women's football. That includes influential people in the fields of sports and sports influencers. You can see in the ad that there's no call to action. That's because this

is really about passion for football and raising awareness of women's football. In terms of views, we already know the number is huge. It's on the same level as the one we made for the men's World Cup. We see the campaign's reach expanding every day beyond the sports field, and being spoken about by international sports icons, economic titles, etc. Women's football became a headline for a few days internationally, so we know we've achieved something.

## What was the insight behind this campaign?

**Tenneson:** The insight was that there is only one passion for football. You can disagree,

you can support different clubs and make different predictions during games. But when you really love football, you love the acrobatic moves, the great moments of skill. This unites all true football fans. The rest is only prejudice. That love for the spectacular moves and intense moments of a game is at the core of the ad.

## Why was it important to opt for a positive tone?

**Delobelle:** Positivity is one of Orange's values and an integral part of its tone of voice.

**Tenneson:** Yes, that's how Orange tackles every subject, and it was core to the brief. That positive tone was essential because we wanted to raise support for the women's team. And if you want to drive more support, you can't be judgemental towards the people you are addressing. You need to give good and passionate reasons to support the team. This isn't an ideological campaign. This isn't about [calling] people out. It's about showing the good reasons to support the team.

## You said you had to go through 80 games in the archives. Tell us about the process of putting this ad together.

**Tenneson:** There's a huge buzz around AI, so you would think that the ad was fully AI-generated. On the contrary, making this ad was a tremendous amount of work which followed a two-step process. The whole craft is based on [overlapping] the images of a French female player and a French male player. The first part of that process was finding the exact frames, which we delegated to partners of the agency named Les Artisans du Film. They spent a lot of time



searching for frames that perfectly matched each other. It was a very meticulous job. Once that was all settled, post-production worked to make those two frames match, edit haircuts, and erase the right things to make the trick realistic and the confusion real. That was done by Prodigious, Publicis' production company.

## What kind of research informed the direction of the campaign?

**Delobelle:** Since we're a partner of the French Football Federation, we had access to some stats. We found that, in France, the TV audience for women's football is three to five times lower than for men's games — this summed up the problem.

**Tenneson:** We did two types of research. First of all, we looked at the prejudices we needed to tackle. Unfortunately, the research on that was pretty basic — we didn't have to look very far to hear or read about all the prejudices people have around women's football. You can hear them at any dinner with your family or friends. The social listening that informed the direction of the campaign was quite quick and effective. Secondly, we did research on the format. It needed to be effective and have the potential to go viral. That's when we identified the compilation [video] as a viral format that was getting shared a lot.

## How does this campaign play into the long-term brand building of Orange? How does it fit into its long-term strategy?

**Delobelle:** We're long-standing partners of French football, so this campaign fits with

our sponsorship strategy. It fits with Orange's strong ethos around responsibility as well. And, of course, this is also about the brand's commitment to equality between women and men, which goes beyond football. Orange does a lot of work on wage equality at a company level too. This campaign reflects all of that and contributes to Orange's long-term brand identity.

## What challenges did you face during the process?

**Tenneson:** The idea came quite easily. The difficult part was actually making the ad. It's simple to put an idea on a slide but the real struggle starts when you have to do the execution after that. We wanted to make the ad as realistic as possible, the confusion needed to be perfect. First, we had to find the right images. Both teams had new players coming in because of injuries. That complicated things as it meant fewer archives for us to go through and find the right match. The process was also a legal nightmare. There were many things to settle around the rights we were allowed to use, which had to be settled between the federations, the World Cup and the many different stakeholders. We also had to look at things like equal screen time for players, because this involved individual contracts with particular players and not the team. It was a fiddly process.

## Tell us about the media plan in place – how did you ensure this would create noise? Did you have any contingency plans?

**Tenneson:** We saw that the highlights compilation was a type of content that really



goes viral and we identified influencers and YouTubers. The idea was to share the first part of the video with the special effects and let people react, and then post the full video. That moment of surprise, that's when it really took off.

**Delobelle:** Yes, we bought views on YouTube, and the rest has been organic.

## What has been your single greatest learning from this campaign?

**Delobelle:** The fact that this video resonated with people all over the world, even in countries where women's football has

already gained more traction, like in the UK, shows how much work there is still left to do to reach equality. We're very happy with the campaign's success, of course. But it also tells us how much more needs to be done.

**Tenneson:** I'd say something similar. Of course, we always aim for successful campaigns but the scale of this one really surprised us, and I share Quentin's mixed feelings. But the good thing this campaign teaches us is that you can achieve great things and change perceptions by speaking to the passion in people instead of talking about your ideology. 🌈

## AI analysis from Daivid

Daivid's AI-powered research platform is trained on millions of consumer data points to predict which emotions an ad will evoke, how well it will hold people's attention, and how effective it will be for the brand. Here's what Daivid's self-serve model had to say about Orange's WoMen's Football ad.

**Brand:** Orange

**Intense positive emotions (vs UK norm):** 46.8% (vs 48.7%)

**Top 3 key positive emotions (vs UK Norm):**

Admiration 24.4% (vs 13.5%)

Hope 15.6% (vs 7.2%)

Excitement 15.7% (vs 10%)

**Intense negative emotions (vs UK norm):** 24.4% (vs 27.4%)

**Top 3 negative emotions (% vs UK norm):**

Anxiety 4.6% (vs 3.9%)

Fear 2.9% (vs 2.8%)

Distrust 2.8% (Same as norm)

**Brand recall (vs UK norm):**

83.5% (vs 54.9%)

**Attention 1st sec (vs UK norm):**

71.8% (vs 71.6%)

**First three seconds:** 65.3% (vs 65.2%)

**Last three seconds:** 59.4% (vs 58.2%)

**Creative Effectiveness Score** (a composite metric that combines the three main drivers of effectiveness: attention, emotions and memory. The average score is 5.8 out of 10): 6.7 out of 10

### Summary:

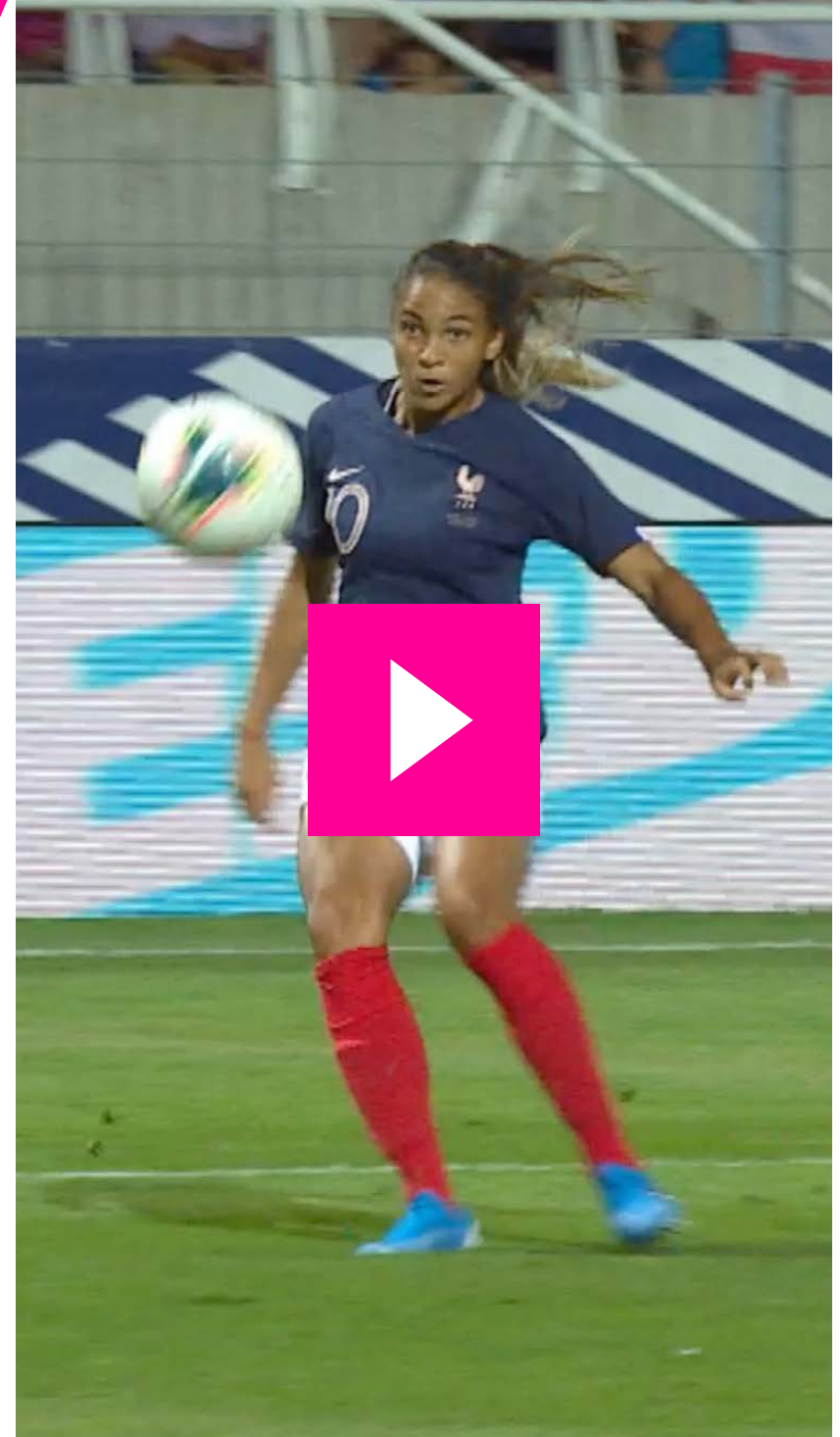
They say football is a game of two halves – and that's certainly the case with Orange's groundbreaking campaign for the 2023 World Cup.

While the ad maintains intense positive feelings of excitement, admiration, pride and interest throughout (like many sports-related campaigns), key emotions change and intensify drastically at the half-time mark, when it's finally revealed that the audience is watching France's women's team rather than the men's team.

The twist results in huge spikes of amusement, awe, hope and, of course, surprise, putting overall positive emotions on par with the UK average. It also sparks intense feelings of awkwardness, embarrassment and distrust (possibly from the use of VFX), as some viewers no doubt struggle to deal with their preconceived expectations and biases.

Such a spike in emotion around the midway mark contributes to the ad maintaining people's attention well until the final frame, when the brand's name is revealed, resulting in a strong brand recall score. Also, by being unexpected, the ad does something very few campaigns manage – generate higher levels of concentration at the end of the video than at the start.

Overall, there's no doubt that Orange scored a winner with this brilliant campaign, managing an overall effectiveness score of 6.7, which is well above the average campaign score of 5.8. 🌟



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# Michael CeraVe

A partnership with an unlikely celebrity and some savvy breadcrumbing helped a skincare brand generate maximum interest in its Super Bowl spot



Skincare brand CeraVe's 2024 Super Bowl spot, fronted by Michael Cera, humorously addressed the similarity between the actor's name and its own, to make the point that its products contain ceramides and are developed with dermatologists — not by Michael Cera.

The campaign, created by WPP/Ogilvy PR, North America, was seeded in the weeks preceding the Super Bowl, starting with a series of stunts by Cera to fuel speculation about his connection to the brand.

On 22 January 2024, content creator Haley Kalil posted a TikTok of Cera at Euro Chemist in Brooklyn, where he was signing CeraVe bottles. Paparazzi photos of Cera holding two bags loaded with CeraVe products were circulated by tabloid publications and on social media; CeraVe brand ambassadors were paid to post about CeraVe's relationship with Cera.

On 24 January Cera appeared on *The Really Good Podcast*, insisting that CeraVe is a reference to him (rather than the skincare ingredient ceramides). On 5 February, Cera appeared in a video on dermatology YouTube channel Derm Doctor, where Dr Muneeb Shah 'confronts' him about whether he's really a skincare expert.

Adding to the speculation, CeraVe posted on its social channels denying rumours of a partnership with Michael Cera, and reiterating that its products are developed with dermatologists.

The campaign culminated in a 30-second spot broadcast during the first-quarter of the (Sunday 11 February). The ad

mimicked beauty ad tropes and featured Cera promoting 'his' moisturiser, only to be challenged by a boardroom of CeraVe dermatologists.

According to the agency, the campaign earned 32 billion impressions and a 2,200% increase in searches for CeraVe following the campaign. The brand saw a 25% increase in sales and the campaign generated 15 billion earned impressions pre-Super Bowl.

To find out more about the campaign, how it leveraged a network of ambassadors, and why humour is an important part of CeraVe's marketing mix, we spoke to Adam Kornblum, SVP and global head of digital marketing at CeraVe, and Charlotte Tansill, president of Ogilvy North America's PR, social and influence practice. They said:

## What is CeraVe's key business challenge?

**Adam Kornblum:** We want to create a shift to generate mass awareness and appeal. How do we share this message on the biggest platform? That message being that CeraVe is developed with dermatologists and we always have been. We've been developed with ceramides since the beginning. So the goal is to own our brand codes on the biggest stage. With so many competitors coming into the space and starting to use these codes — like 'developed with dermatologists' and using ingredients like ceramides — how do we ensure that we own the codes? In our logo, it says CeraVe, developed with dermatologists. It's really in our DNA. So for us it was about how we use this biggest moment in culture for the US and really enhance the brand status further.

## How did that feed into the brief?

**Kornblum:** The brief was interesting. CeraVe has been ranked as number one in share of minds with teens [by] investment bank Piper Sandler. One news outlet even said that we are [one of] the 10 Gen Z status symbols taking over American high schools. So it was about how we enhance our cultural brand presence further beyond Gen Z. And what better way to do it than at the Super Bowl? So the brief [said]: we have a Super Bowl ad, yes. But what we really want is to create a 360-degree world, experience and immersive story that has an earned-first approach. So the ad was obviously important in the brief, but the reality is we knew we needed to do something different, rather than take the typical traditional route of creating a 30-second spot.

## Given the context of the Super Bowl, was humour always part of the brief?

**Kornblum:** Humour was part of the brief because it's something that the brand has been leaning into for quite some time, especially with Gen Z, especially on TikTok. We even have dedicated influencer programmes that focus on this tonality. Some of [that content has] seen massive, viral success. So part of the brief was, 'here's what's been working for the brand, especially on social media, so how does that translate to this bigger narrative on this bigger platform?' Humour is something that we've been doing, and it's been a part of who we are, and our playful tone. We have this cool situation with CeraVe where we can be really playful and at the same time we're very clinical, and we're a dermatologically driven brand.

## How did you discover consumers were making the Michael Cera link?

**Charlotte Tansill:** CeraVe has been a leading brand with significant success in social and an influencer-first approach — it's not afraid to take risks or lead the category. So when we received this brief, we knew that the 360-degree was going to matter hugely, so we did what we always do, which is turn to social listening for intelligence, insights and inspiration, to ensure that whatever work

we came back to them with would resonate in culture. And when we did that research, we found a few Reddit and social posts from a few years back, speculating whether there was a connection between Michael Cera and CeraVe. And we immediately saw the potential of it. Knowing that the Super Bowl is a space that commands celebrity and disruption and bravery, we knew that Michael Cera would be an unexpected partner, especially for a skincare brand that's

developed with derms [dermatologists], not celebrities.

**Kornblum:** That approach was also what made Ogilvy stand out. I think there's nothing worse than when a brand just decides it wants to push a message and that's it, and hopefully consumers like it. The approach of 'What are consumers saying? What's the vernacular? What are people leaning into? And how can we take that further?' is the best marketing. Especially when it comes to aiming for an earned-first approach. If we really want to do something that can go viral, that can really build buzz, the inherent DNA of the idea needs to be built in something that already exists in this world that people are talking about.



**'Knowing that the Super Bowl is a space that commands celebrity and disruption and bravery, we knew that Michael Cera would be an unexpected partner'**

Charlotte Tansill, Ogilvy North America'

# SOCIAL & INFLUENCER GRAND PRIX

**It was quite incredible how far those staged paparazzi photos travelled. How did you ensure that it achieved such reach? Did you have contingency plans in case it didn't create noise?**

**Kornblum:** There were definitely contingency plans, it just so happened that plan A did work. But we had many different types of influencers ready to share this news across many different platforms. The way PR was integrated, the way influencers were distributing the content, and when they were doing it, really set it up for success.

**Tansill:** It was meticulously planned from the get-go. Rather than having a beginning, a middle and end in that 30-second spot, we had a beginning, middle and end that rolled out over the three to four weeks of the campaign that culminated in the spot. We put those protective mechanisms in place — by partnering with hundreds of culturally relevant influencers, you have built-in distribution.

And by meticulously planning digital and PR, we protected ourselves to ensure there was success. The amount of times we went viral was fantastic — it was perhaps even bigger than we could have imagined.

**Kornblum:** We also lived across touchpoints. There were three phases: a speculation phase where 'rumours' were going around, then phase two — the brand 'fights back' — and then phase three was the resolution, of course, with the Super Bowl ad. But once we started to 'fight back' and explain the message, there was a pop-up on our website and we were sending out emails and SMS messages. We have a big database and a lot of web traffic from the website, we were [using] every touchpoint.

**Tansill:** We were live for about three and a



half weeks and we were meeting daily as an integrated team to look at how the internet was responding, what our real-time opportunities [were], and how we should pivot and optimise. So it was meticulously planned from the get-go, but we also had our finger on the pulse the whole time.

**Kornblum:** As we were doing these meetings and everyone was listening and leaning in, there was an agile nature to it. So we had our plan, which was our foundation, but then there were some agile marketing moves that we made, just to ensure that we were pulling every lever possible.

**How did you ensure you got the best results from your influencer network? How much creative freedom were they given?**

**Kornblum:** We briefed every paid influencer on the campaign, but we allowed them

to take the story and run with it in their own style. We looked for these unique influencers that you wouldn't expect CeraVe to use and gave them an overview of the story. From there, we almost let them improv in their own way. These influencers are famous for a reason — for their storytelling and how they tell the story. So the goal was to tell the story in a way that [they] typically would. A lot of these messages that we're putting out there, especially with paid influencers, clearly say they're paid. So the message and the storytelling need to be so good that people just don't care that it's paid. So the brief really needs to be open, where [the influencers] have a good understanding of what's taking place but have freedom within this framework.

**Tansill:** CeraVe is sort of the leader of freedom in the framework, they've been doing it for years, recognising the unique

power of influencers to connect with their audience and not overprescribing or controlling. So we just kept doing what CeraVe has always been doing in this campaign. One of the things that worked really well was we had a real multi-tiered approach. We had our hero influencers on set with us and we put them in the front seat and built the campaign around them and their creative talents and what people love them for. And we went outside of beauty and skincare [to find] different types of creatives to help us bring this campaign to life. And then we also had the seeding elements where you may have seen a lot of influencers opening up those boxes that we sent them from Michael Cera. That went to hundreds of influencers.

**Kornblum:** We've been working towards this — it was a natural evolution of where we've been.

## And did that freedom go all the way up to Michael Cera? It felt like he went method – it was hard to tell what was his brief and what was just his own individual sense of humour.

**Kornblum:** He's unreal. Even on set, for some of the influencer videos that he made, like the one with Dr Shah, that was improv. It was incredible.

**Tansill:** And Michael Cera doesn't have social media, which was another reason that made him a bit of an unconventional choice for a social-first campaign. Certainly that feeds his mystique and his likability and his interest as a celebrity, because you don't get so much access to him. So then to see him at the forefront of this social media campaign, what might have been perceived as a challenge to overcome at the onset of a partnership with him, actually turned out to be an opportunity.

**Kornblum:** That's a really important point — he doesn't have social media, so you can't lean on him for that distribution. So when you're working on an earned-first social media PR campaign, if your key star doesn't have social media, it really requires a specific strategic amount of storytelling and strategic distribution. How are you going to get the story out there, when you can't rely on a massive celebrity to push out a message on Instagram? It made us as strategic as possible in our distribution.

## Did the Super Bowl spot hinge on his participation or were you always going to the Super Bowl? Did you have another route?

**Kornblum:** We were always going to do the Super Bowl; that was certainly the

brief. The Michael Cera connection made so much sense to the story that we were trying to tell about the brand without being very convoluted.

**Tansill:** And when we approached him, he was immediately very excited about the campaign and the idea. So certainly knowing that the idea hinged on his participation, to have that quick interest from him was a relief.

**Kornblum:** He joked about it on Jimmy Fallon saying he was the only celebrity we reached out to. That was funny.

## A lot was made this year of the lack of ads targeted at women, despite them making up around half of the Super Bowl audience. What audience was this ad targeted at?

**Kornblum:** Our base is heavily female. But we're for everybody — therapeutic skincare for all, great products for everyone. And as far as distribution went, the campaign targeted everybody, so many different demographics, so many different age groups.

## What were the challenges of pulling this together?

**Tansill:** The conversation around Michael Cera's social media, and solving for that was a challenge that we overcame. The integration with PR and earned media relations, too. Obviously, in an earned-media context you don't have control, so there was a bit of an X factor there — will we get coverage in earned media outlets? But the team was incredible and [brought] journalists on the road with us. And once the excitement and momentum started happening in social media, it all started snowballing.



**Kornblum:** I don't think we had that many challenges in the moment because we gave ourselves so many challenges beforehand — all these potential plan B calendars, how we roll out content, who we roll out with... It was just about agility. It was about being grounded in the strategy but being playful.

**Tansill:** By the time we got to Super Bowl Sunday, we already had 9 billion impressions. So we were a little bit relaxed going into Super Bowl Sunday, because in a way our campaign was culminating, and had been live for three to four weeks before that.

**Kornblum:** True — as far as any anxiety going into the day, we had like a four-day command centre, screens everywhere, we were ready to go. And since we were so plugged in, we knew exactly what we needed to do on the day.

## Is there any scope for this to become something long term or was it a fun one-off?

**Kornblum:** We shall see.

**Tansill:** One interesting and important component of this campaign is the edutainment aspect — in the Dr Shah content, for example, not only are you entertained and laughing, but you're genuinely learning about skincare. And that's a hard duality to hit. From the get-go, one of Adam's main goals that he was very clear on was that we want to entertain and educate through our content.

**Kornblum:** We had dermatologists involved in this humour along the way and I think that was critical — always having the derms at the centre of what we say and what we do. So Michael was the hero, but the dermatologists were just as much the hero, which was important for us as a brand that's developed with derms. 🩺

## AI analysis from Daivid

### Intense positive emotions (vs UK norm):

55% (vs 48.7%)

### Top 3 key positive emotions (% vs UK Norm for each):

Amusement 23.12% (vs 21.7%)

Interest 10.71% (vs 22%)

Relief 7.86% (vs 8.6%)

### Intense negative emotions (vs UK norm):

31.4% (vs 27.4%)

### Top 3 negative emotions (% vs UK norm):

Awkwardness 12.86% (vs 4.9%)

Confusion 9.29% (vs 9.4%)

Boredom 8.57% (vs 10.5%)

### Brand recall (vs UK norm):

86.4% (vs 54.9%)

### Attention 1st sec (vs UK norm):

69.6% (vs 71.6%)

First three seconds: 63.6% (vs 65.2%)

Last three seconds: 59.2% (vs 58.2%)

### CES score (overall effectiveness score):

7.1/10

### Summary:

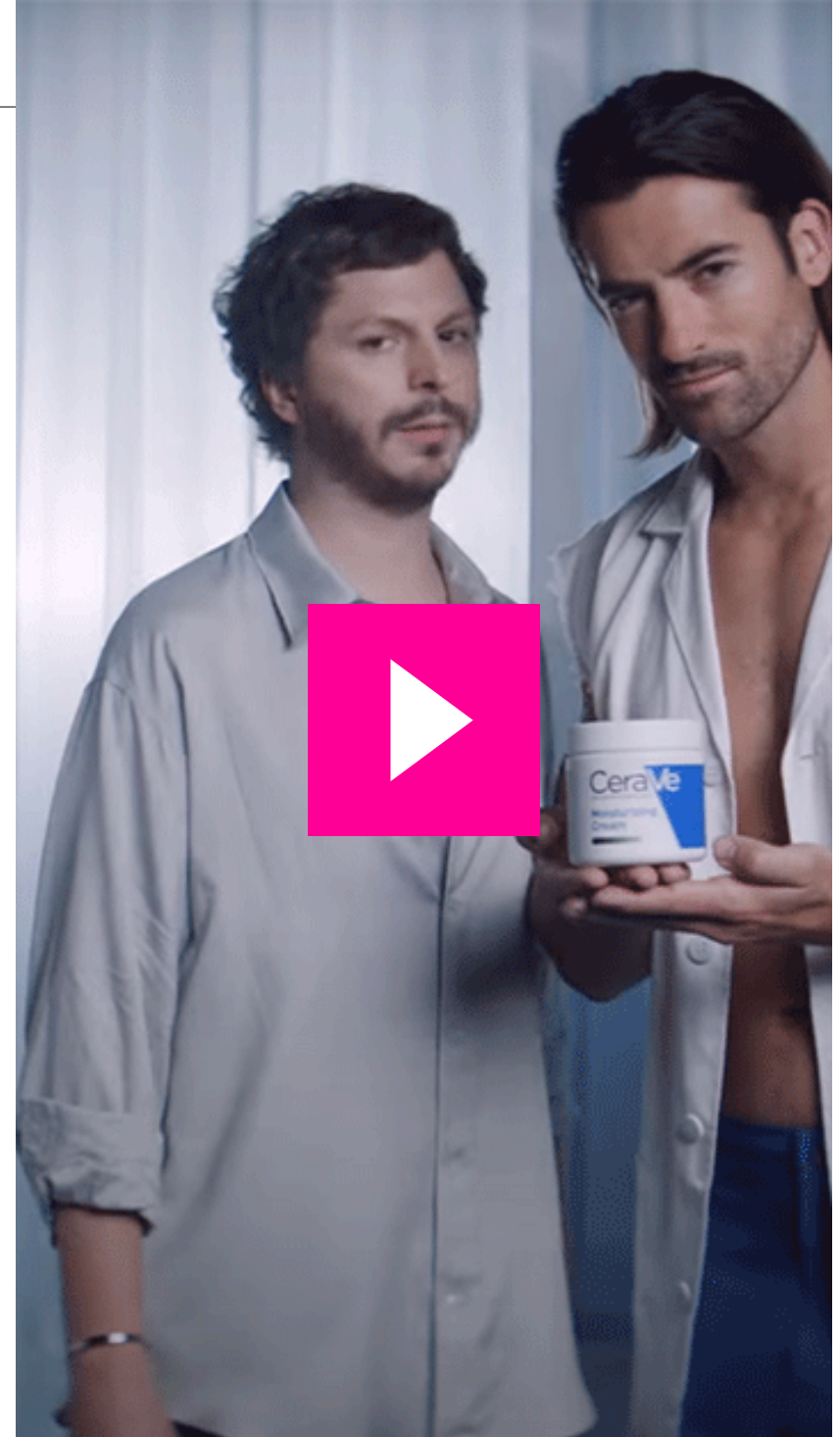
Being funny is tough enough. But making people laugh through advertising is even harder. So you have to give Cerave huge credit for making almost a quarter of viewers chuckle at its Super Bowl campaign, which stars actor Michael Cera.

Such a strong response resulted in overall intense positive emotions being well above the UK norm.

However, negative emotions were also well above average. That's because humour is the great polariser — one person's *Seinfeld* is another person's *Gavin and Stacey*. So, while the ad generated strong laughs, the beauty-ad pastiche also elicited intense feelings of awkwardness, confusion and boredom. Some people just didn't get the joke — or did and just found it annoying, which may account for attention levels being around par.

The high amusement levels could never have happened without that set up though, so ultimately the ad scored highly overall because of that bold creative decision.

Overall, thanks largely to high brand recall and strong positive emotions, the ad managed a very high CES score of 7.1, making it the fourth most effective ad from Super Bowl 2024. 🎯





Briefing /

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# Ketchup Fraud

Heinz's multi-year campaign to reinforce the iconic status of its ketchup won the Creative Effectiveness Grand Prix at Cannes Lions. Here's how the brand turned restaurants' habit of hiding inferior condiments in Heinz bottles into proof of its popularity

Three out of four North Americans prefer Heinz Ketchup when eating out — that's what Kraft Heinz says about the popularity of its signature red sauce. But the brand's Ketchup Fraud campaign points out that sometimes restaurants cut condiment corners by filling Heinz containers with cheaper alternatives.

Created by agency Rethink, Toronto, the campaign uses undercover-style visuals to illustrate instances of sauce fraud, which were inspired by a viral image of an employee at chicken restaurant Nando's seemingly filling up a Heinz Ketchup bottle with an unbranded substitute. Following the April 2023 launch of the campaign's print, OOH and social assets, Heinz took to social media to get people to name and shame restaurants engaging in Ketchup Fraud — with the promise that some offending restaurants would be sent a pallet of the real stuff.

According to the case study, Heinz was added to 33 restaurant locations. The campaign generated 92% positive sentiment and an engagement rate 128 times above benchmarks. To find out more about the global campaign and the insight behind the



execution, Contagious spoke with Megan Lang, head of brand communications of Heinz North America, and Mike Dubrick, CCO at Rethink, Canada.

## Who are Heinz Ketchup's key competitors within the restaurant space?

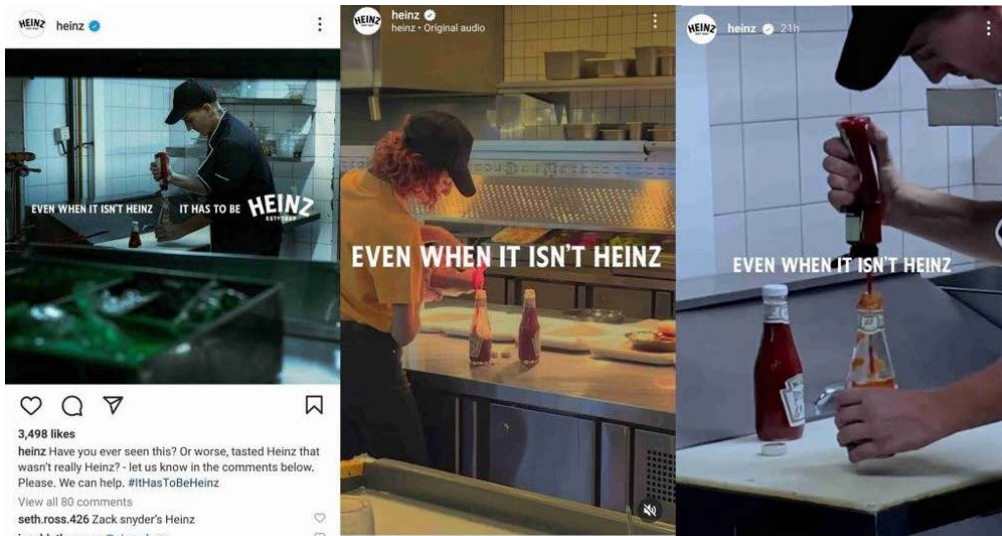
**Megan Lang:** Heinz Ketchup really does have a variety of both branded and unbranded competitors in the restaurant space, which we call internally 'Away from home'. Heinz is still the leader in both retail and away from home, but we do compete with both branded and unbranded competition.

## Was there a creative brief for this campaign?

**Lang:** For this particular piece of work, it was born from the same brief that we've been working on for a long time: how can we make a more concerted effort to create conversation in culture such so that our 'operators' — which is what we call our restaurant customers — take notice and join in the conversation.

## Did you conduct any research to help inform the campaign?

**Mike Dubrick:** We're all genuine fans of the Heinz Ketchup brand, and we all interact with the brand in culture. This idea was born from the experience of being in a restaurant and seeing a premium-looking glass Heinz Ketchup bottle on the table, but despite it being completely full, the label maybe looks a bit older or a little dog-eared on the side and having a suspicion that something just doesn't seem right — it really started from that conversation.



**‘Despite the obstructions, angles and bottle being one eighth the size, you look at this and you instantly know it’s a Heinz ad’**

Mike Dubrick, Rethink

## What was Heinz hoping to achieve with this campaign?

**Dubrick:** Consumer demand is really what drives interest for restaurants to carry the product, and there’s lots of ways to drive consumer demand, but Ketchup Fraud finds a way to create consumer demand in the eyes of the restaurateurs, so that these business owners see the value of the Heinz brand and not just ketchup as a commodity. It’s such an important thing for Heinz to remain an icon and not fall into the trap of becoming a commodity.

## Was the campaign influenced at all by the viral image of the restaurant worker filling up a Heinz Ketchup bottle with another ketchup brand?

**Dubrick:** This campaign wasn’t necessarily a reaction to that specific video, we were already having this internal conversation

about this behaviour happening out in the world. A lot of our ideas start from a gut feeling, but it’s not good enough to just think that it’s true, you need to have receipts. For Ketchup Fraud, it’s not just Heinz saying that this is happening in the world, but having consumers validate it, too. So, we went to the internet to find proof and there was a lot of evidence of this taking place and it was a lot more common than we thought. That example was probably just the most glaring example of this caught in the act moment, so it inspired the execution a lot more than it did the insight.

## What was the production process like of capturing these visuals and how did you manage to tell this whole story within just a single image?

**Dubrick:** It was really important for us that

the images felt real and raw, so we actually used different cameras on set to try and capture that moment. The visuals also had to be relatable from a global standpoint, as this is a behaviour that people see all around the world, and we wanted to make sure that the locations felt like they could have been potentially anywhere. We talked about how far back and obscured the bottle should be, and to Megan and the Heinz team’s credit, they were certainly less precious than we normally would be about how prominent the actual brand and bottle were in the shot. If the labels were all perfectly facing and everything looked pristine, like it normally would in print, then all of a sudden you lose that realism. But despite the obstructions, angles and bottle being one eighth the size, you look at this and you instantly know it’s a Heinz ad – which really speaks to the power of the brand.

## How did you land on the name Ketchup Fraud for the campaign?

**Dubrick:** We had a lot of back and forth conversations about what the name should be. In our minds, this was a global insight and we wanted this to be a global piece, so we had to make sure that the name was a really quick, relatable and understandable phrase. One of the names we had tossed around was Counterfeit Ketchup, but through our internal peer review process at Rethink, one of the pieces of feedback we had from our international creatives was that they were unsure everyone would understand ‘counterfeit’. Fraud however just felt really simply and easy to understand, obviously you want it to feel powerful, but at the same time not get in the way of the campaign – we needed the insight to really shine through.



## What is the legacy of the 'It has to be Heinz' slogan and why did you use it for the campaign?

**Dubrick:** I feel there's been a nice transition in terms of the meaning of that line. In the past, it's been a bit more functional around quality and speaking to that attribute of Heinz Ketchup. What we've tried to do is shift the meaning to still retain that, but also shift into a broader meaning about the iconicity of the brand and this notion that nothing else will do. Even when restaurants are not going to serve Heinz Ketchup, they're still putting it in a Heinz bottle — that is a living and breathing manifestation of the 'It has to be Heinz' tagline, and pays it off better than we ever could.

## What is Heinz and Rethink's 'Go then grow' philosophy and how was that utilised for the Ketchup Fraud campaign?

**Dubrick:** The way we like to interpret 'Go then grow' is that there's always a grand plan, but you launch it in an iterative way that allows you to be flexible, nimble and reactive as possible to the campaign as it launches into the world. As a reference, something like Draw Ketchup inspired another iteration in the form of AI Ketchup — there's opportunities here too as we've got this big human insight and there's lots of ways to bring it to life.

## Now that people have seen it, how is the idea being grown?

**Dubrick:** We wanted to put this work out and then see if our hypothesis was correct, to see if consumers would react by saying



'yes, that's me' or 'I know this place'. But this idea is so much bigger than a print piece, now we're moving awareness into action. On social media we've been more overtly asking people to name names, DM us and let us know who these places are. Then the next phase is to send those places a pallet of Heinz Ketchup. It's really not about shaming restaurants, it's about

making sure that when people want it to Heinz, it should be the real deal.

**Lang:** Mike is totally right, this is not about putting restaurants or businesses on blast, it's about listening to the voices of consumers and putting the power in their hands. That's what has been really fun to watch as everyone's been reacting to this unspoken truth.

**'[The campaign] is a living and breathing manifestation of the Heinz tagline'**

Mike Dubrick, Rethink'

## What was the media plan?

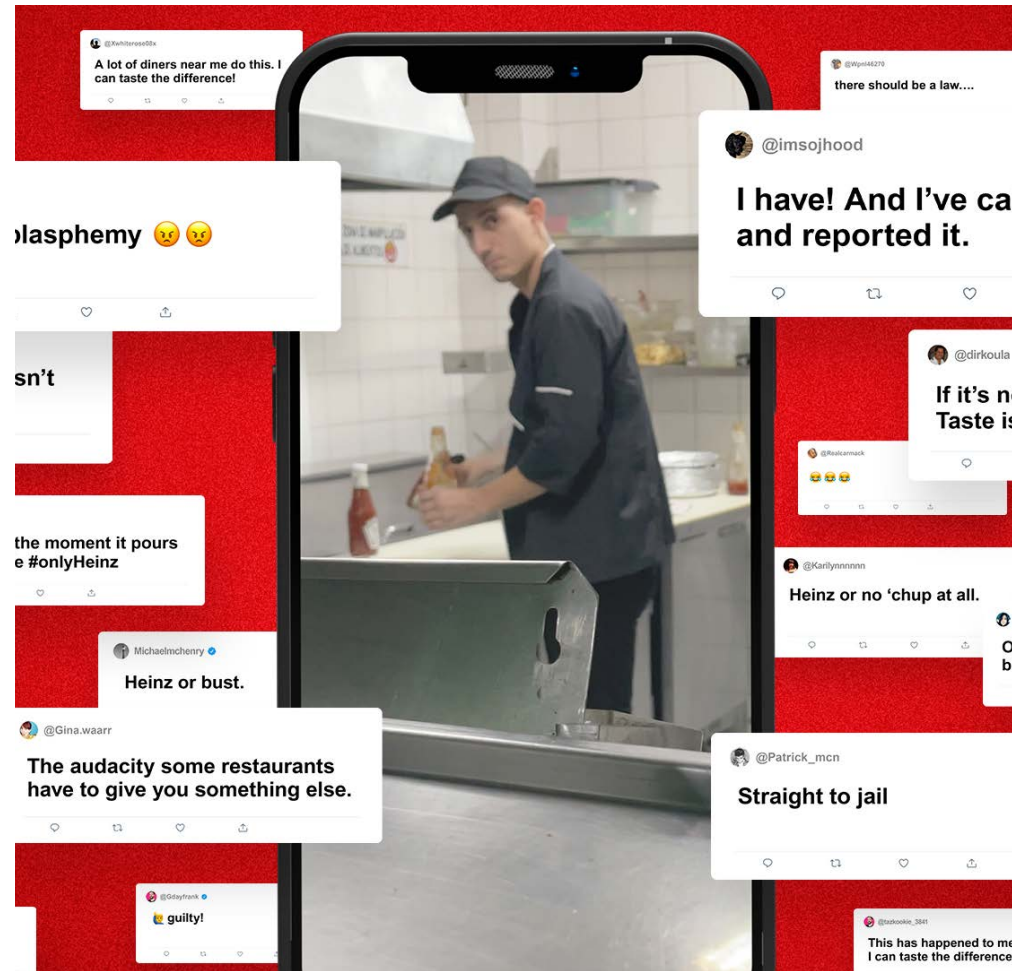
**Lang:** The campaign started with those beautiful stills that we had as OOH and print, where we decided to lean in quite heavily with the *New York Times* — which felt like a great match due to the voyeuristic nature of the visuals.

**Dubrick:** We felt like Ketchup Fraud deserved the stage of being a full-page print ad, which is one of the most powerful and engaging ways that you can see the ad.

**Lang:** We also made some cool video content, too. So Ketchup Fraud didn't just stick to one thing, it really lived across the board. Then on social, we put quite a bit of paid media behind this campaign to make sure that we were getting it in front of customers and drumming up some conversation. We went quite big with this first phase of the campaign, but these are evergreen assets and we'll definitely be using them again over the coming months and putting money behind them in the future.

## What were the KPIs behind the campaign and what results can you share?

**Lang:** This campaign is about driving conversation and engagement in culture, so a lot of what we're looking at is the conversations and sentiment on social to see the reactions of our consumer base — which to date has been really great. We've already drummed up quite a bit of conversation and seen people really engage with the fact that this is an unspoken truth that Heinz has exposed. But it's very difficult, if not impossible, to measure the effectiveness of a specific print or OOH ad like this.



**Dubrick:** With any piece of work, we're trying to drive momentum, energy and heat around the brand to put Heinz Ketchup front and centre in people's minds. That's why it's important to not only consistently put out great work, but also at a high volume, making sure that Heinz Ketchup is pulsing in market and consistently hitting people with a new thought, idea or something totally unexpected that lands what the brand is all about.

## They say that imitation is the greatest form of flattery, is that how Heinz approaches its competitors who copy and steal salience from the brand?

**Lang:** This is a very common behaviour for brands that are as iconic, distinctive, recognisable and as ubiquitous as Heinz. We don't tend to get caught up in that, but it's a good signal of the iconicity of Heinz Ketchup and the admiration that the category and our competition has for our brand. Then of course there's the less interesting answer to this question, which is that we do have protection in terms of trademark and IP, so there's only so much that imitation brands can do within the industry and it's important for us to protect that.

**'You've got to first go with your gut and then you can start to rationalise it afterwards. If you're trying to do things that are different, they're going to feel unfamiliar'**

Mike Dubrick, Rethink

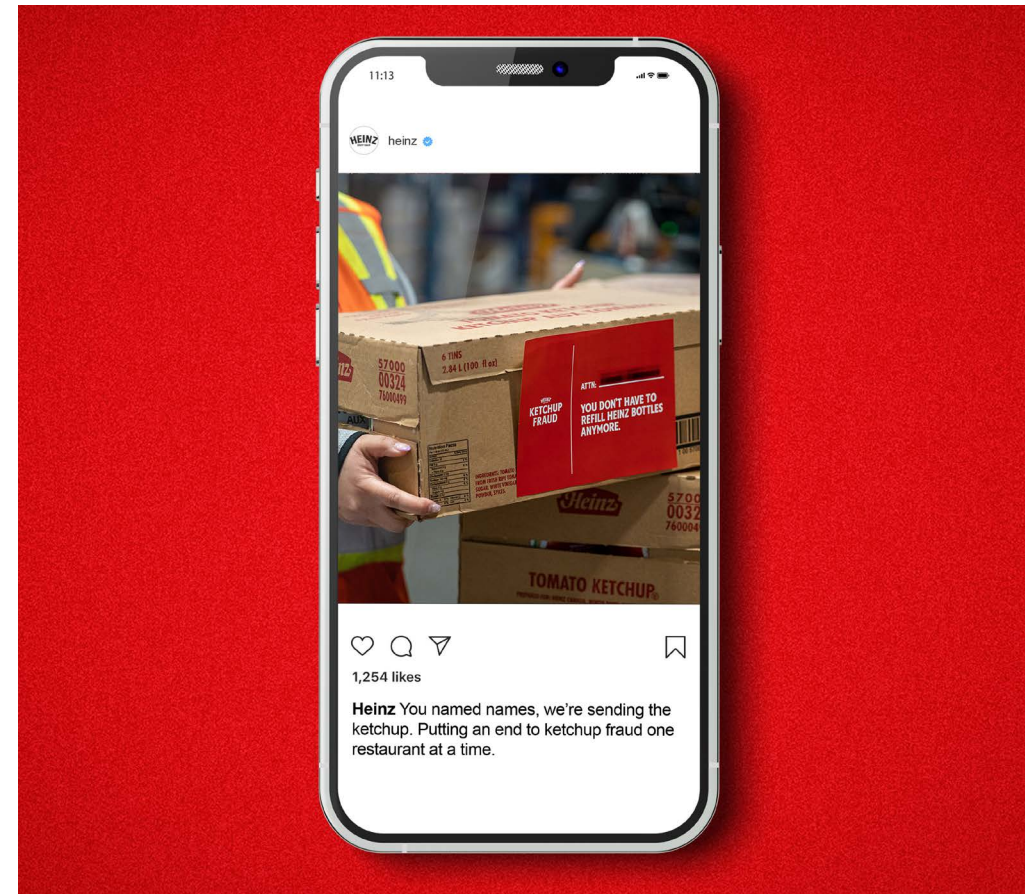
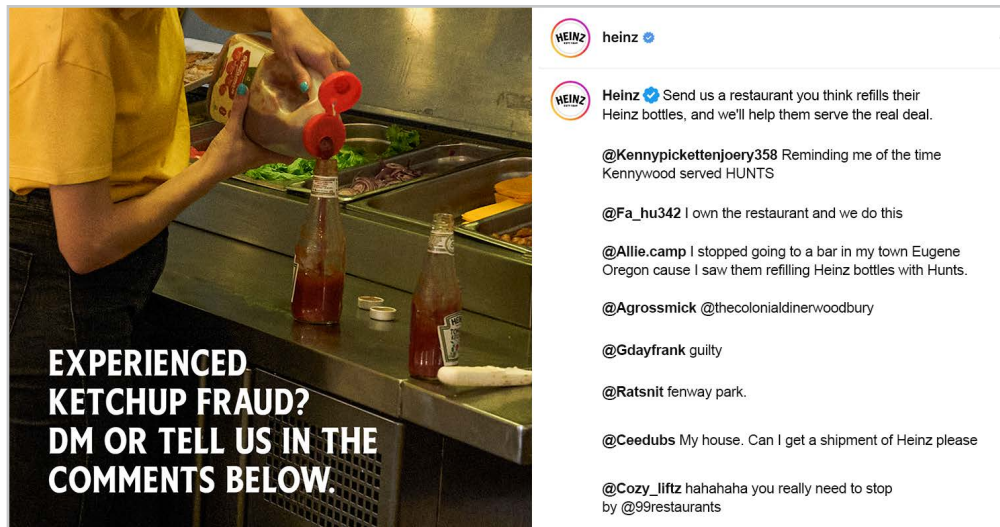
# CREATIVE EFFECTIVENESS GRAND PRIX

**Given the cost of living crisis, this ad could have struck a different tone with businesses that are trying to cut costs to help operate — is that something you considered?**

**Dubrick:** It didn't feel right that something other than the real deal should be inside a Heinz Ketchup bottle. One of the things I'm really proud about Ketchup Fraud is that a lot of brands would have probably shied away from this, but for us it's a really powerful demonstration that the brand matters. It means so much that people will put out the glass Heinz Ketchup bottle even if they're not putting actual Heinz Ketchup in it. An important clarification is that we always try to attack these problems through a tongue-in-cheek approach. The intent of Ketchup Fraud is to create curiosity, intrigue and relatability versus an antagonistic

finger-pointing campaign.

**Lang:** We talk a lot internally at Heinz about providing and delivering value to consumers, and value on a certain brand or in a certain category doesn't always look or feel the same. In this case, we felt really comfortable with Ketchup Fraud during this moment in time because we're putting the power back into the voice of the consumer and letting them speak to what they value. Heinz is more premium than the rest of what's offered in the category and commands the value for money – if we didn't have that strength to back it up then I would have been really nervous. The execution was also really crucial in keeping the campaign supportive and to a certain degree lighthearted – we really needed to nail the tone so we didn't come off as tone deaf during a moment of inflation and a lot of economic stability.



**Do you think that the best campaign ideas are usually the ones that make you feel the most uncomfortable?**

**Dubrick:** It's not always necessarily uncomfortable, but it should evoke a feeling. I like to start from my gut and work my way up. You've got to first go with your gut and then you can start to rationalise it afterwards. If you're trying to do things that are different, they're going to feel unfamiliar.

You need that feeling of discomfort or newness to evoke some kind of feeling — that's when you know you're onto something powerful.

**Lang:** For me as a client in this situation, I could have found a lot of reasons to say no to this idea. But I'm happy that we trusted our guts and followed our instincts because that allowed us to say yes to something that ultimately we're really proud of and will spark more a lot more great work for the brand. 🍷

## AI analysis from Daivid

### AI Analysis by Daivid

**Intense positive emotions (vs UK norm):**  
40.2% (vs 48.7%)

**Top 3 key positive emotions (% vs UK Norm for each):** Craving 7.2% (vs 3.8%)  
Satisfaction 13.8% (vs 9.3%)  
Surprise 14.2% (vs 12%)

**Intense negative emotions (vs UK norm):**  
34.3% (vs 27.4%)

**Top 3 negative emotions (% vs UK norm):**  
Confusion 16.3% (vs 9.4%)  
Boredom 11.2% (vs 10.5%)  
Awkwardness 5.3% (vs 4.9%)

**Brand recall (vs UK norm):**  
61.7% (vs 54.9%)

**Attention 1st sec (vs UK norm):**  
62.3% (vs 71.6%)

**First three seconds:** 56% (vs 65.2%)

**Last three seconds:** 49% (vs 58.2%)

**CES score (overall effectiveness score):**  
5.5/10

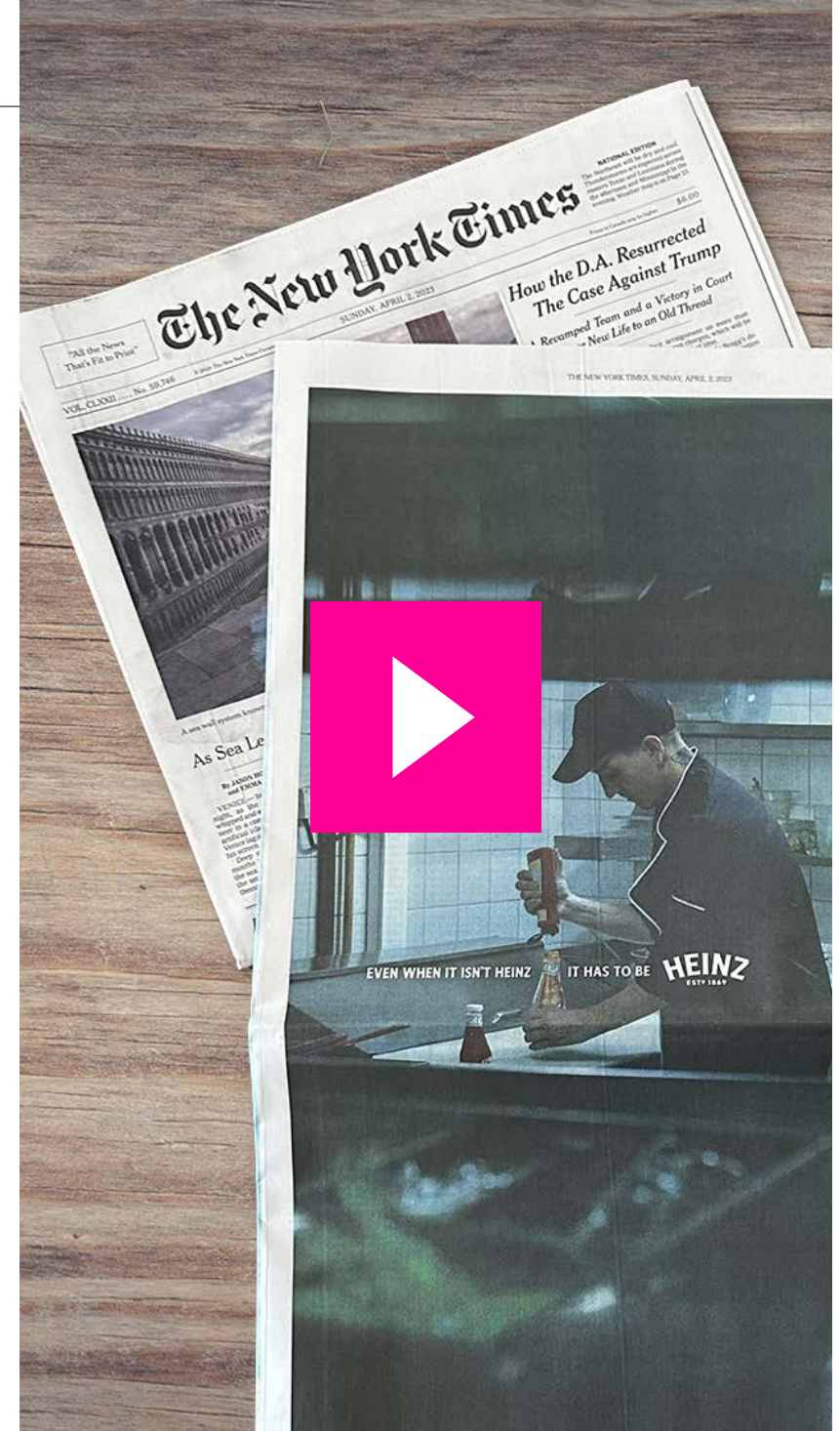
### Summary:

Heinz's TikTok video — part of its award-winning It Has To Be Heinz campaign — certainly managed to squeeze a lot of emotion from its six seconds of action.

Unfortunately, the feelings it did generate were largely negative. Shot to make it appear like someone at a cafe or restaurant secretly being filmed filling up a Heinz Ketchup bottle with another brand of tomato sauce, the video generated stronger negative emotions than the average UK campaign and much lower-than-average positive emotions.

This was largely driven by intense feelings of confusion, as people struggled to understand what they were being shown in such a short space of time. Feelings of boredom and awkwardness were also above the UK norm. Such confusion and boredom in turn resulted in much lower than average levels of attention throughout, particularly by the end. People could not even maintain their interest for six seconds.

With the Heinz brand playing a key part in the creative, brand recall was slightly higher than the UK average, but not enough to save the ad scoring below average for overall effectiveness at 5.5 out of 10. This was possibly due to the fact that the ad was tested in isolation without the people being exposed to the broader campaign. ❌





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