

Nivea for Men - “The Great Football Experiment”

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Brief

Nivea has built the profile and brand awareness of its ‘For Men’ using a marketing strategy that almost exclusively focused on traditional media and channels. However, faced with the ongoing challenge of engaging the male skincare market and recognising the audiences fast growing adoption of new technologies and communication channels, the brand decided it was time to take a more digital-orientated approach to leverage its sponsorship of the England Football Team to reach this male market.

The aim was to launch a campaign that would use digital channels and expertise to further leverage the brand’s existing association with football in a way that would resonate with the male target audience. To achieve this, Nivea devised and launched the ‘Great Football Experiment’.

Strategy

To achieve this goal, Nivea For Men developed a programme of activity that directly related to many men’s personal football experience, combining the passion, excitement and fun felt by the everyday footballer with the dream of fame and elite athleticism.

Supporting a Sunday League football team, the last bastion for millions of failed professional footballers, Nivea For Men provided all of the added extras that an amateur team could never afford. From professional coaching for a season to nutritional advice, physiotherapy and even training on how to do the ultimate goal celebration, all stops would be pulled out to support the team in their Sunday struggle into football stardom.

To leverage this activity among the target online male audience, the team's journey through each challenge and the season would be documented to create a range of viral video content. The content, which would be hosted on the Nivea For Men website, would be seeded widely across social media and digital channels to engage the male audience and create a strong following around The Great Football Experiment.

Execution

To achieve this, the Nivea For Men digital marketing team launched a nation-wide search to find one lucky Sunday League team that would become the guinea pigs of The Great Football experiment. To be selected, entrants were required to record and upload a video of themselves, explaining why they deserved to be at the centre of the campaign. These entries were then shortlisted and opened up to a public vote to find the most worthy team. The winner of the competition was Essex-based, Ivory FC.

Ivory FC embarked on 'The Great Football Experiment' by meeting their FA-qualified coaches, who included ex-England internationals Ray Wilkins and Ray Clemence, and former national manager Terry Venables. To ensure the players stayed in peak condition to make the most of this coaching, they received further professional support from top physiotherapists and nutritionists. Meanwhile, a brand new kit, supplied by Umbro, made sure they looked the part.

To help the team celebrate any improvement in style, Ivory FC was given lessons in the ultimate goal celebrations from Icelandic team, Starjnan FC who have become famous for their imaginative celebrations and skill on the pitch. All of this training and preparation then culminated in a final match against a team of ex-England internationals.

Each step of the team's journey was documented across ten webisodes, charting all the highs and lows of Ivory FC's season on their road to football stardom. As well as hosting each of these episodes on the brand's website, Nivea For Men partnered with several agencies including CMW London, Octagon, Caret as well as digital agency Onlinefire to engage consumers through viral video content across Facebook and YouTube. This content was also placed on a variety of select national news websites and key online men's titles to further promote sharing and engagement among the target audience, ultimately driving brand awareness and visits to the Nivea For Men website.

Results

Following the launch of the campaign, The Nivea For Men Great Football Experiment website received over 600 video entries from Sunday League football teams across the country. This engagement was maintained throughout the selection process, using the audience to vote on and choose the winning team.

Following Ivory FC's selection, the webisodes which were created garnered more than 3.35 million YouTube views throughout the season, helping drive over 1,000 new subscribers to the Nivea YouTube channel. This was supported by more than 65,000 Facebook likes which were generated by the content over the season, growing website traffic by over

200,000 visitors.

Further to this, The Great Football Experiment also secured coverage across online national UK news outlets including theGuardian.co.uk, Mirror.co.uk and TheSun.co.uk, as well as being featured on the websites of ESPN, Match of the Day and Zoo.

Further to this, the Great Football Experiment campaign has won several industry awards, including the a Hollis Sponsorship Award for Best Digital Activation in a Sponsorship Campaign, and more recently the Sport Industry Awards' Best Use of Digital Communications in Sport.