



LET'S
GO
CRAZY

Cultural
Leadership
for a Happier
World

**Jay Chiat Awards for
Strategic Excellence 2013**
Brand: Coca-Cola
Category: Global Strategy

Our brief was startlingly simple: re-establish Coca-Cola's cultural leadership as an icon of happiness in today's complex world. To talk about happiness in a jaded world full of bad news was a tough ask. A global deep-dive on current cultural tensions revealed one live, raw, painful tension: All over the world, we can't believe the inhumanity and unkindness that we're capable of showing each other. Turning on the news angers and depresses us, and we ask ourselves where our humanity has gone. We know we need kindness more than ever. 98% of consumers agree it's the key to a happier world, and breaking science proves that **giving** makes us even happier than receiving. Yet at the same time, we live in a world in which being kind to strangers is considered crazy. Naïve, foolish and stupid. Well, then, let's all be crazy, we said. Let's celebrate the givers, wherever they are. Because they're the ones who make the world a happier place. These are all true stories about the world's crazy-kind people.

SUMMARY



A black and white photograph of two hands clapping. The hand on the left is wearing a light-colored, long-sleeved shirt. The hand on the right is wearing a dark-colored, long-sleeved shirt. The hands are positioned in the center of the frame, with the fingers pointing upwards. The background is plain white.

Coca-Cola's brand positioning is one of the world's most enviably strong - recognized as an icon of happiness the world over. And yet this position remains perilously fragile. Everyone's talking about happiness these days, and it can easily seem elusive, generic or even trite. The only way to keep it feeling authentic is to keep the promise of happiness true to the reality of people's lives. A tough ask when faced with the jaded cynicism of consumers the world over. So the Coca-Cola brand team approached us with what was in many ways the most inspiring, thought-provoking marketing brief in the world – how do we keep our icon of happiness alive? What can this brand – this quintessential embodiment of the Innocent archetype – do, that will allow us to retain genuine cultural leadership in making the world a happier place?

THE CHALLENGE

NOT EASY

We realized quickly that being an icon of happiness is tough in a world full of bad news.

Everywhere we look, the headlines are of doom and disaster. Psychologists have proven that we're neurologically wired to seek out and focus on negative news out of a self-preservation instinct. But it also stresses us out and makes us anxious and unhappy. It's no surprise that the amount of bad news we see leads us to feel we live in an unhappy world.

But what jars and shocks us is not just the bad news itself. It's the capability that human beings have to do bad things to each other. That's where the real pain, sorrow and confusion lies.

And in the midst of all this, we're trying to keep an icon of happiness alive. In the form of a carbonated beverage. Known and loved the world over, sure, but a fizzy drink nonetheless. We had our work cut out for us.





THE PRESENTATION

It was a sunny autumn morning in Mexico City. Blue sky, birds chirping. At 9am, we were due to present our thinking on the brief – it was a three-way pitch. We had some good material, we should have been confident. But deep inside, we felt unsettled. The entire night before, and the one prior, had been spent watching the unbelievable footage from the London riots unfold on BBC World. We were from London. Watching your hometown (in the case of one of us, your street) go up in flames while you're 5,000 miles away is a deeply disconcerting experience. On the way to the meeting, we had a spark. When the clients walked into the darkened pitch room, there was a single image projected onto the large screen. London burning: a large building in Peckham exploding into flames. The image was from six hours earlier and had already become iconic on the web. One by one, the greetings turned into hushed silence. The slide changed. A scene from Utoya, where the Norwegian mass murderer had killed so many innocent teenagers just a week before. Brains got to work, connecting the dots. And finally, a video. In which a young girl, not two years old, gets run over by a truck. She lies on the side of the road, bleeding, but still alive. We're in Foshan, China, just a few weeks ago. As we watch the girl's body on the street, we notice with horror that there are passers-by, but they aren't stopping. Twenty minutes have passed. Finally the nineteenth passerby stops. She scoops up the little girl's body and carries it off, in a hand-drawn rubbish cart.



The lights turn on. The faces around the room are white, ashen. Suddenly a beautifully stylized image from in the 1950s pops onto the screen. The girl reaches out to offer us a refreshing Coke. ‘And we want to keep an icon of happiness alive?’ it reads.

‘Let’s talk’.





WHERE WE WERE COMING FROM

You see, we'd gone and done our research. A lot of it. And we realized something pretty quickly. In a world so surrounded and so jaded by inhumanity, people were asking themselves every day: where has our empathy gone? Our decency? Our kindness? In fact, we realized, we weren't out to just sell the notion of happiness. We were facing a much deeper cultural tension here. One that felt real, live and raw, all over the world. **A basic disbelief in the inhumanity and unkindness that we as human beings are capable of showing each other.** And this was a tension that we, as Coca-Cola, were in a unique position to address.

By embracing the opposite of all we had just seen.

Kindness.

Time and time again, through our global ethnographic and quantitative research, with over 5,500 people in over 140 countries, kindness was the concept we kept arriving back at. We had spent weeks talking to people about the issues and tensions in their lives. And it came down to a startling fact: 69% of us believe that we are born kind, but need to learn to be selfish as we get older. And 98% of us believe that the world to become a happier place, we need to start being kinder to each other first.



We took this seriously. We talked to experts all over the world, on kindness, on giving, on charity, on positive psychology. And we found something that gave us a buzz. Researchers at the National Institute of Health in America had found that when people give, the part of their brain that lights up with pleasure does so more strongly than when they receive. Giving, it turns out, actually gives us a little high, positive endorphins that balance out stress. So giving has real, and long-lasting health benefits, we found – there are strong correlations between those who give (of their time or money) and those who report lower anxiety, higher endorphine levels, leading to lower risk of heart attacks, improved memory and longer life expectancy. So giving makes us happier, healthier people, because as givers, we enjoy just as many benefits as the receiver.



And that was it. The core of our strategic story had been found.

As Coke, what we want most is more happiness. Kindness, we'd found, is a tangible, active route to happiness for everyone.

Giving is actually the world's happiness, doubled.

Kindness = Happiness x 2.

Our strategy was that simple. Let's celebrate the givers, we said. Even though they're sometimes the crazy ones, the odd ones, the ones who don't quite fit into the norm.

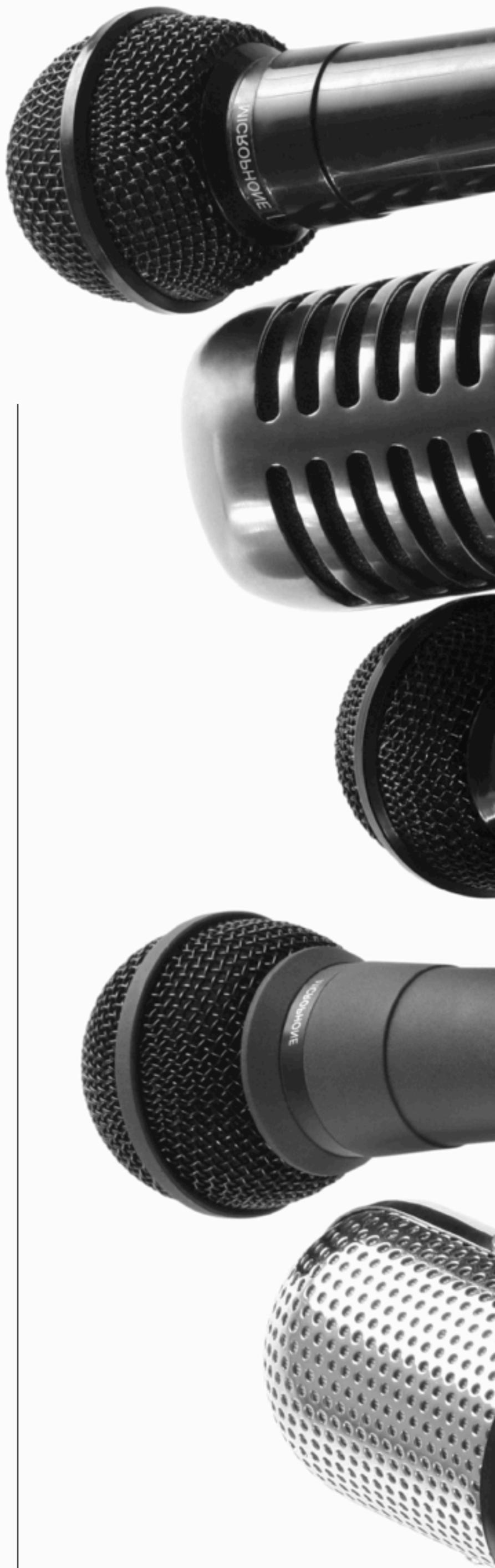
**We knew
that the
world's
happiness
begins
with them.**

THE CREATIVE LEAP

The creative team took givers as their starting point and focused on the truth that most of us think that people who are kind to strangers are crazy. A bit nuts. Why are they helping, we wonder. What do they want? But here's the thing. The world needs these crazies right now. The people who'll put others first, who'll stop to help, who'll ask for nothing in return.

Everywhere we looked, we found these crazies. From the dancing traffic policeman in Lagos who entertains crowds stuck in gridlock to the guy who goes around the world hanging up swings just to see people smile. The world is full of givers, kind people who are 'crazy for good'. The core of the campaign was sealed – celebrate local 'Crazy Masters' all over the world to remind people how easy it is to make the world a happier place, putting our suspicion and cynicism aside.

The clear strategic guideline we set was that these were all real people who'd been crazily kind long before Coke came along, and would continue to be so long after. This wasn't a case of brand-led storytelling. It was peer-to-peer storytelling, just amplified by Coke, an encourager of kindness, a believer in better.



People
who are
kind to
strangers
are crazy.





Then let's
be crazy.

The idea spread like wildfire within the Coca-Cola system, with markets queuing up to adapt and run their own Crazy Master stories. It has been the most successfully globalized Coca-Cola campaign in the past ten years. From just two markets in January 2013 (Mexico and India), we were in 40 markets by May, and are scheduled to be in over 100 markets spanning every single geographical region of the world. And the project has spread across social networks globally with an estimated 100,000 fans already joining various local Crazy for Good campaign sites to share their own stories. 'Crazy for Good has driven markets crazy excited' said Cristina Bondolowski, the global head of the Coca Cola Trademark. Jackie Jantos, creative director for Coca-Cola said, 'When you have 100 markets seeking to adapt work you know you've got something special'. Brand bonding scores have hit the roof: 'in markets like Egypt, we've seen a complete turnaround due to this campaign', said Bondolowski.



According to Rodolfo Echeverria, VP Latin America for Coca-Cola, 'This was an insight-driven campaign.'

A human campaign that moved the world'.

The power of a strong, universal cultural insight to drive globally impactful creative work could have no stronger vindication.

**THEN
CALL ME
CRAZY**

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