

How Heineken won Rugby World Cup 2015

Rothco

AGENCIES



CLIENT



AWARD

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

BRONZE

COMPANY PROFILE

Rothco is a multi-award winning independent creative agency, passionate about ideas that solve commercial problems through creative solutions. We are 140 people changing the fate and fortunes of global and local clients.

Starcom is a leading media planning and buying agency based in the heart of Dublin. We are part of Core Media – Ireland's largest media buying and planning organisation. We provide media planning and buying services across all media touch points. We believe in putting consumer understanding at the heart of our planning to create meaningful experiences that deliver results and grow business. We believe in the importance of data-led insights that can drive that understanding of consumers. That's what makes us the best at what we do.

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

For over two decades, Heineken has been a proud supporter of rugby with long standing sponsorships of both Rugby World Cup and the Heineken Cup (now known as the ERCC Champions Cup). We know rugby, we love rugby and we support rugby! The link between Heineken and rugby is not a short-term thing – we have been associated with the game for a long time and it is something we wanted to continue and celebrate. One would assume that all was well with the association - but sometimes it's not that easy.

Rugby World Cup Sponsorship

As Rugby World Cup 2015 approached, Heineken Ireland sought to capitalise on this long-established relationship with rugby to address some problems. We were experiencing a fall in brand association with rugby and, importantly, sales volumes.

There had been a number of contributing factors to these problems;

- 1.** The Irish provincial teams were now seeing a decline in their fortunes in the Heineken Cup. As they were no longer competing at the latter stages of the competition, there were less drinking occasions for Irish fans to enjoy during the season. Opportunity to consume was dropping, which was contributing to a continuing drop in Heineken's Share of Lager Market.
- 2.** We then lost the exclusive naming rights to the European Cup in 2014 – this had quite a dramatic effect on the brand as the positive association with Europe's premium club rugby competition was now significantly eroded.

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

3. And our main competitor, Guinness, had engaged in significant spend to maintain a higher SOV than Heineken.

Guinness	2014	2015
SOV	26.4%	20.84
Ad Spend	€6.035M	€4.949M

Source: Nielsen

Heineken	2014	2015
SOV	14.8%	13.88%
Ad Spend	€3.233M	€3,498

Figure 1

We had quite a job to do!

MARKETING OBJECTIVES

Commercial Objectives

Brand Heineken's downward trend in lager consumption had been most pronounced amongst younger consumers experimenting outside of the category and in value segments. With 71% Heineken volume attributed to males aged 35+, Heineken had to find a way to:

- A). Stem and reverse decline among younger men (18-24)
- B). Grow volume with their core target Men 25+

To do this, we wanted to maintain our share of lager growth that we had seen between Q1 and Q2 of 2015 (+1%).

Marketing Objective

In a very, very crowded sponsorship market, our marketing objective was to ensure that Heineken was **the brand most associated** with the RWC tournament in Ireland. This would be addressed by employing a multi-faceted communications plan designed to make Heineken become the No. 1 brand associated with RWC 2015.

Role of Communications

To drive our consumers to engage with Heineken because it delivered premium RWC brand experiences that are innovative and witty, overcoming their belief that Heineken is not as exciting as other beer brands. To reach our audience, we would push our message out through a number of channels, both traditional and non-traditional, as vehicles for our comms.

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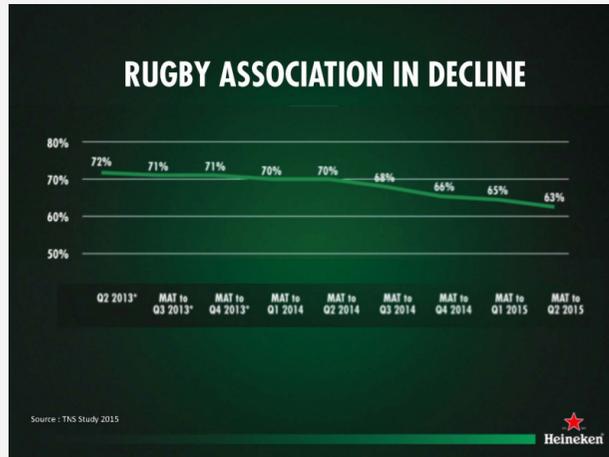


Figure 2

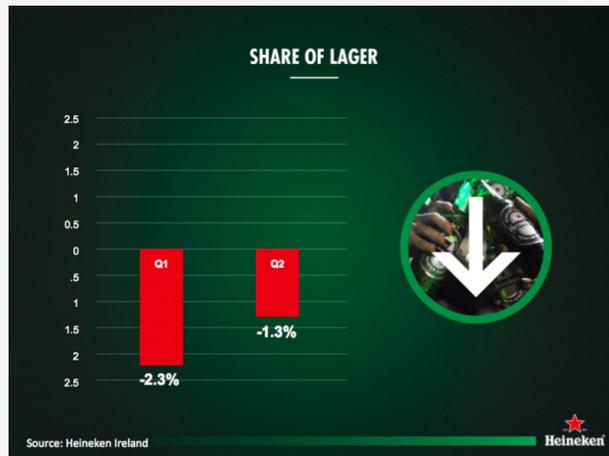


Figure 3

THE TASK

Heineken is a global beer company, consumed in 192 countries all over the world – more than any other beer. They are HUGE! They have been sponsoring rugby for as long as you can remember. And they have been sponsors of RWC for years. Surely they won't have any issues when the World Cup is on?

Well, not exactly!

Immediately preceding RWC 2015, Heineken had seen their brand association with rugby decrease year on year from a high of 72% in Q1 of 2013 to a mere 63% in Q2 of 2015. (Figure 2)

Couple this with a declining share of lager market in Q1 and Q2 of 2015 and we have a problem. (Figure 3)

We also had to bring a globally led brand on what was essentially a local journey – these were local issues after all, we needed a local solution –while creating a campaign not just for Ireland but also a raft of other markets.

And then there was the small issue that this was the most commercially sponsored Rugby World Cup ever, and you can see the quandary that we were in. (<http://www.psgsponsorship.ie/blog/rwc-2015-its-war-on-and-off-the-field>)

Competition for Share of Voice was extremely high, and while normally this was something we only had to worry about with other alcohol brands, now it was us against everyone else!

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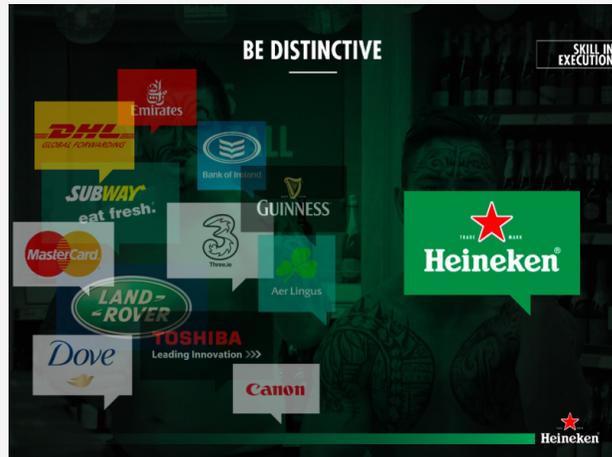


Figure 4

THE TASK

And we only had an 8-week window to complete this task. (Figure 4)

Our task was to deliver a campaign that would engage a somewhat overwhelmed audience in a way that capitalised on the shared values between Heineken and rugby, and what is special about the Rugby World Cup.

Fans love it because it is true sport, it is not pre-ordained: it's unpredictable.

As an alcohol brand, we are heavily restricted in our communications. Where other non-alcohol brands could potentially use famous current players in their comms, we are not permitted to do this in any way. This posed a further challenge when competing with other sponsors who could capitalise on the fame of current players.

In short then, how do we, as a major sponsor, stand out from the crowd – how do we achieve our not inconsiderable objectives of getting our audience to:

- ▶ drink more of our beer,
- ▶ see us as the No. 1 brand in rugby against a range of other sponsors, and
- ▶ see our brand as more relevant from a core audience perspective.

THE STRATEGY

Our challenges were quite clear – arrest the decline in both volume/share of lager and brand association between Heineken and rugby.

This involved Heineken and its strategy team engaging in a process of examining every consumer research contact it had throughout its 20-year journey through rugby.

We re-analysed research conducted during Heineken’s development of the Heineken Cup, as well as that from two decades of RWC sponsorships. This longitudinal analysis provided the basis to understand exactly how fans feel about the RWC and its social opportunities, as well as how it differs from the regular rugby season.

What this revealed is that fans love the unpredictability of the World Cup. Rugby is an unpredictable sport, with all its layers and phases. The RWC is where the sport is at its most unpredictable, with match-ups of teams and styles from different parts of the world, between teams who do not know each other well. This leads to mouth-watering opportunities for fantastic but unpredictable rugby.

More than any other iteration of the sport, the RWC throws up moments you just can’t predict, but love all the same.

This is as true from a social perspective as it is from a sporting one.

We needed to use the unpredictability of rugby to show that we know and love the game as much as the supporters to affect equity scores for the brand, but equally we needed to incentivise people to use rugby to socialise in the trade in order to affect volume.

Not only was this strategically correct for the issue Heineken faced, but it was also right for the brand and what it stands for. The DNA of the Heineken brand is open-minded, inventive and world class.

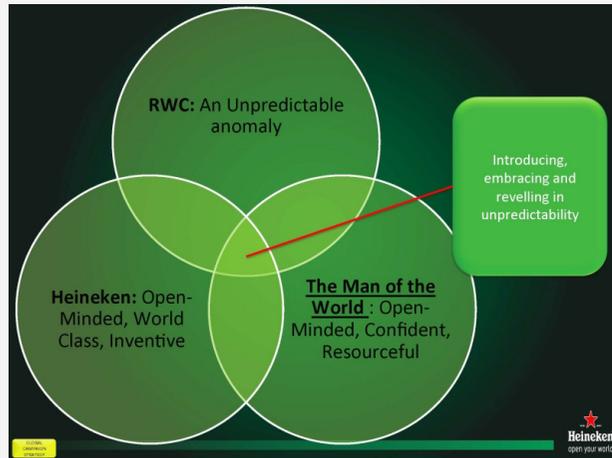


Figure 5

THE STRATEGY

Heineken is a brand represented by its idealised drinker; what we call the Man of the World (MOTW). He represents similar traits: he is open-minded, confident and resourceful. By focusing on the unpredictability of the World Cup, it allowed us the perfect foil to explore the idea that unpredictability, for those with the right outlook on life, leads to opportunity. This typifies the Man of the World but also echoes people's view of what is great about the World Cup. By focusing on unpredictability, we also made every game an opportunity, thereby driving the social viewing occasion and through this, volume.

Now we just needed an idea to bring this strategy to life. (Figure 5)

We identified 3 key Connection Moments – moments within the target audience's real life where they are the most receptive to engage with the brand;

- ▶ **Mid-Week Flexi Time** (when the weekend is over, a game is finished, the critics have had their say and we look forward to the next game ahead) - **Anticipation**
- ▶ **Watching The Match, at Home or in Bar** (must-see live TV wherever you happen to be. First screen allows us to cement brand association, second and third screens provide opportunities to tell our story) - **Enjoyment**
- ▶ **The Magic of Match Day** (shared moments from the time tickets are secured, to the excitement of the match day itself) – **Unforgettable Moments**

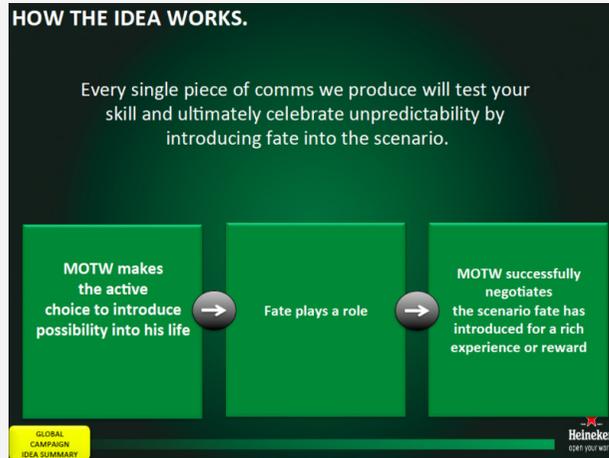


Figure 6



Figure 7

THE IDEA AND COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITY

Building on the identified consumer insight of supporters' relationships to the unpredictability of rugby, we developed an idea that was directly linked to the first unpredictable element of every game of rugby: the coin toss! This allowed us to focus on an asset that was universal to all fans but also allowed us to ramp up local activity beyond traditional media.

As a named sponsor, **Heineken had access to a money can't buy opportunity**; we could give fans the chance to toss the coin between two captains at a number of Ireland games during the Rugby World Cup tournament.

With this unique opportunity, the global creative idea was born. The Rugby World Cup 2015 campaign told consumers, **"It's Your Call"**.

We created global TV and OOH, introduced audiences to this new campaign, which gave consumers the opportunity of a lifetime. Heineken Ireland's job was to make this global campaign further resonate with Irish audiences, excite them about the opportunity to be really part of the RWC, and of course, to do it in a way that only Heineken could. (Figure 6)

The Campaign

Our TV commercial tells the story of our man of the world and his journey to deliver the coin for the aforementioned coin toss to our waiting referee before a major RWC Game. His journey is a series of encounters, determined by the toss of a coin, thus introducing fate into his mission. On his journey he encounters legends of the game John Smit and Jonah Lomu, poses with the RWC trophy, stumbles into an official reception for various dignitaries, and then finds his way onto the pitch to deliver the coin. (Figure 7) (Connection moment: **Watching The Match, at Home or in Bar**)



Figure 8

THE IDEA AND COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITY

The Out of Home was an iconic stadium image heroing the iconic Heineken Bottle, inviting people to take part with “It’s Your Call”.

Social media also played a vital recruitment role in telling people how they could enter the competition to win this special prize. (Figure 8)

But that wasn’t all – we needed something launch the entry mechanic showing people how to take part in the On Trade (licensed premises) and the Off Trade (retail channel).

This gave birth to **The Jonah Machine**.

This was our opportunity to share an amazing experience with our local audience, which featured a rugby legend in the truest sense of the word.

On a Sunday in May we set up what we called “The Jonah Machine “ in a pub in Dublin. From the outside it looked like a simple promotional game console that was distributing RWC prizes, but it was what was powering it inside that was really exciting!

As punters approached the game console they were asked to play ‘It’s Your Call’, a simple, coin toss game where they had to call heads or tails. If they called it right, they won a prize: a rugby ball signed by none other than rugby legend Jonah Lomu. What was surprising about their signed rugby ball was that it was personalised. And as more and more people played and won, their rugby balls were getting more and more personalised.

As time went on, the crowd began to get confused as to how Heineken were producing personalised merchandise, until we revealed all.

THE IDEA AND COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITY

Enter Shane Horgan, ready to take over his 'shift'. When Shane opened the game console and the real Jonah Lomu emerged, punters went crazy and could not believe their eyes. One of the all time best players had been inside the games console the whole time. In a pub in Dublin. Only feet from where they were sitting!

The video nicely set up the "It's Your Call" promotion for viewers, promoting the fact that they'd have the chance to play in their own local. Unfortunately, Jonah Lomu couldn't go everywhere, as the It's Your Call game travelled around the pubs and off-licences of Ireland, but fans were still rewarded with great RWC merchandise and the chance to win the ultimate prize of a coin toss at the tournament itself.

The video was released on all Heineken social channels to outstanding results from all over the world. In the first 24 hours of it being posted, it had already received over a million views. Irish rugby legend Brian O'Driscoll even gave it his sign of approval on his personal Twitter. And some lucky Heineken drinkers in Dublin had the ultimate rugby story to share with their mates.

Trade Activations & TV3 Show

We wanted to ensure this campaign reached as many of our audience as possible, so we looked at both traditional and non-traditionl channels.

In the On-Trade, consumers who bought a pint received a unique Heineken coin in their change. In the Off-Trade, consumers found a unique online code inside their Heineken pack. (Connection moment: **watching the match at home / in pub connection moment'**)



Figure 9: The Jonah Machine

THE IDEA AND COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITY

The code could be entered online or in pub through the Heineken ticket machine to reveal a virtual coin. Consumers were asked to choose heads or tails and if they called it right they won a number of instant prizes: pints, signed jerseys or something a bit different - a ticket to appear on TV3 and Heineken's midweek entertainment show "The Sin Bin" as part of the live studio audience, challenging them to become MOTW.

We had 6 trips to give away during the tournament so we created 6 episodes with TV3 to coincide with our ultimate prize giveaway – the coin-toss at the games.

Together with TV3, Heineken produced a series of 6 ad-funded programmes called 'The Sin Bin'. It was a light entertainment 30-minute programme centered on the RWC. The show aired midweek at 10pm (Connection Moment: **'Mid-Week Flexi Time'**). Panelists changed weekly with Joe Molloy (Off the Ball anchor) and Andrew Maxwell (Irish comedian) ensuring guests were entertained and interviewed.

Each week the studio was filled with winners from both on-and-off trade who had won via buying a pint/ pack of Heineken and playing the coin toss game. The presenters introduced a test of skill each week to whittle down the finalists and involved the celebrity guests each week by having them help the two finalists through enjoyment and engagement.

On match day, live on TV3 just before kick-off, the Heineken winner from each week's show was shown at the coin toss in the tunnel. (Connection moment **'The Magic of Match Day'**.)



Figure 10

THE IDEA AND COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITY

Newstalk Outside Broadcasts (OB's)

We further enhanced MOTW's experience by developing two outside broadcasts (OB) specifically for RWC to work in tandem with the entire brand communications. We decided to use each OB at the height of tournament conversation, firstly in Munster at the Cork Opera House on September 9th for the launch with Ronan O'Gara, and secondly in Dublin's 3Arena on Oct 14th, ahead of the Ireland-Argentina quarter-final game. The 3Arena event was the largest ever national, live Outside Broadcast with a panel of international rugby legends in Brian O'Driscoll, Felipe Contepomi, Tim Horan, Stephen Ferris, Keith Wood and Eddie O'Sullivan.

We gave away all tickets using #itsyourcall through all social channels, radio and in pub, enriching the social occasions for our rugby MOTW, and we included VIP experiences, backstage passes and "meet and greets" for those that engaged the most through social channels. See Figure 10.

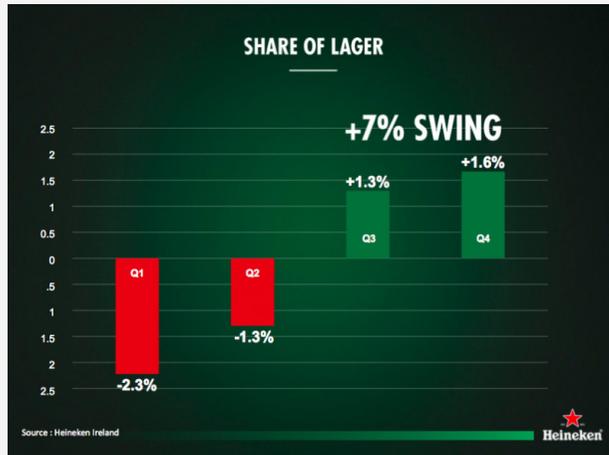


Figure 11

RESULTS

In the aftermath of the campaign, the results spoke for themselves.

Results for The Commercial Objective:

- ▶ The Share of Lager enjoyed a massive 7% increase overall, moving from a figure of -1.3% in Q2 to +1.3% in Q3, and rising to 1.6% in Q4. (Figure 11)

When compared to Heineken Cup support in 2014, we saw a huge increase in Hectolitre growth post RWC 2015, showing that a shorter burst of activity around RWC led to a huge jump in volume compared to the previous long term support of Heineken Cup in 2014.

2010	Heineken Cup 2014	RWC 2015
Ratio ROI	2:1	4:1

- ▶ Volume of Heineken in the 18-24 target segment increased by 6% (Source: Heineken Ireland)
- ▶ In accounts that activated with 'It's Your Call' activity against those that didn't, the average increase in volume sales was 4.5% (Note: the activations and results did not include any price promotion or free product sampling) (Source: The Brand Fans)

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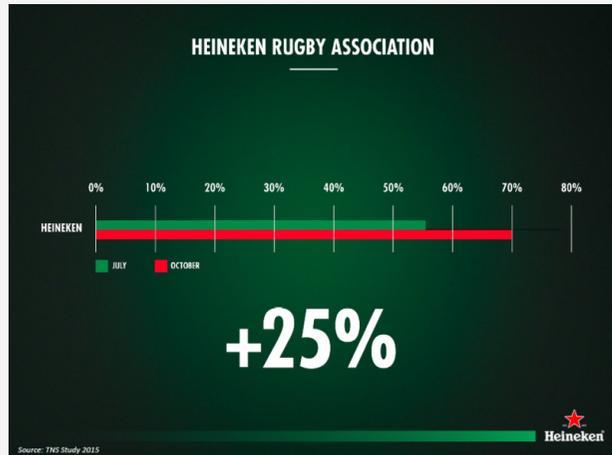


Figure 13

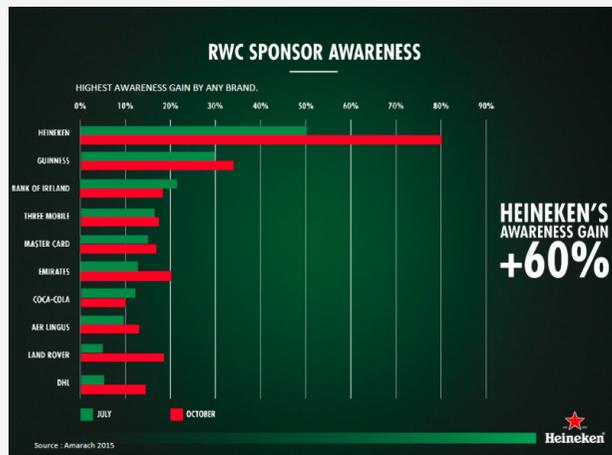


Figure 14

RESULTS

Results for The Marketing Objective:

- ▶ Heineken was confirmed as the No.1 brand most associated with RWC 2015 in Ireland, reaching over 80% Brand Awareness as confirmed by three independent research companies. (Sources: Livewire; BrandFans; Mextrixlabs)
- ▶ Rugby Association Score: 25% increase. The highest gain of any brand in Ireland. (Figure 13)
- ▶ RWC Sponsor Awareness: 38% Increase. The highest gain of any brand in Ireland. (Figure 14)
- ▶ Distinctive Brand: 35% increase. The highest single increase of any Heineken campaign. Increasing Brand Equity scores across the board were identified as frequency drivers for RWC 2015, which served as levers to increase share. (Figure 15)
- ▶ To become the No.1 brand associated with RWC, the KPI set was to reach 1,000,000 engagements (classified as video views, competition entries, social engagements, on- and off-trade engagements and CRM engagements). The campaign delivered a total of **3,433,868 engagements**, outperforming the set KPI's 3.4:1.

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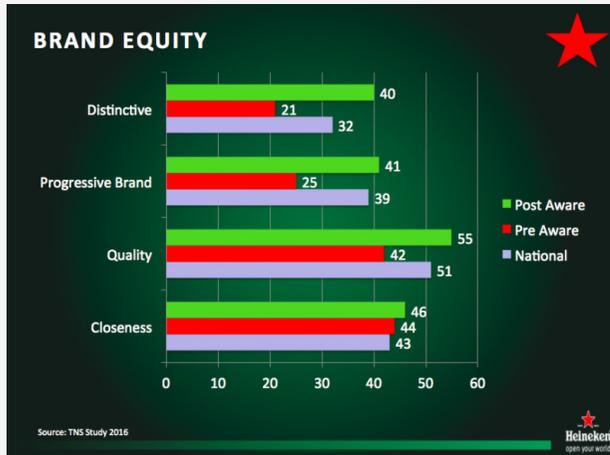


Figure 15

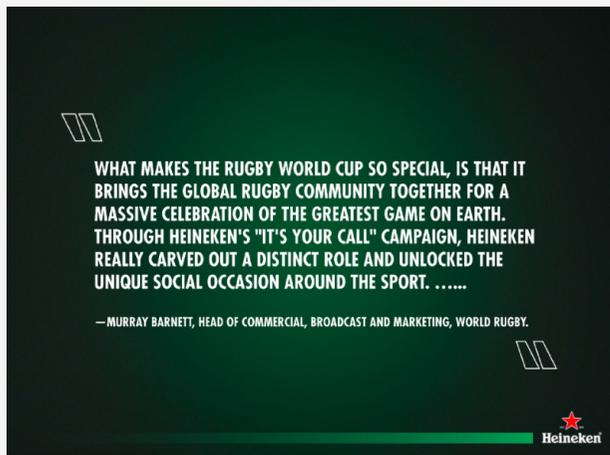


Figure 16

RESULTS

What Else Did The Campaign Achieve?

Experiential Activity

- ▶ TV3 and Heineken's ad-funded programme 'The Sin Bin' delivered an average rating of 2.5 tvrs per show (M1834), 91 tvrs over the 6 shows (37,856 impacts) and 256 promos over the period. Total AFP package value delivered = €1.84 million, a saving of 86.5% on marketing ROI
- ▶ The Coin Flip activation delivered 36,878 actual plays (people playing the game) with 9,536 unique winners.
- ▶ The Final RWC OB event in Dublin's 3Arena was the largest live radio event in Ireland, resulting in 4,720 fans attending, and the #OTB3arena delivered 879 tweets, 53% original tweets and delivered into 6,321,124 timelines.

Digital Activity

- ▶ Heineken CRM data capture resulted in 5,484 sign-ups to the base in a brief 8-week window.
- ▶ Stunt video with Jonah Lomu delivered 2,701,319 engaged views with total views reaching 7,149,448 for the four released videos over the tournament.
- ▶ PR delivered a total domestic reach of 14m.
- ▶ Social Media #itsyourcall delivered domestic reach of 8,881,403.
- ▶ Our Twitter handle had 771,087 imp & 100k engagements.
- ▶ Facebook page reach 2,433,971 and 100,625 engagements.
- ▶ Heineken.ie/rugby website had 94,717 visits across the 6-week period.

IMPACT ON BEHAVIOURAL ACTIVITY AND PAYBACK

The easy thing for us to do would have been to take the global assets and roll them out without any locally focused communications. To effect behavioural change, however, we realised we needed to offer our Irish audience something more that would bring Heineken closer to them, so that we could change the way they feel, think and act.

By employing non-traditional channels, for example facilitating the production of a 30-minute TV format, we were able to deliver premium experiences beyond those which we enjoyed as major RWC sponsor.

In research conducted post RWC 2015, 39% of those surveyed agreed that Heineken's sponsorship of RWC was a good fit for both parties, showing that people were open and respectful of the sponsorship. This was borne out by TNS research which showed that 84% of Males 18-24 and 86% of Males 25-34 were aware of Heineken's sponsorship of the RWC Tournament post event.

Brand Approval and closeness scores were at a record high with almost 50% of all males 18-24 stating that 'Heineken is a brand for them'. (+20% yoy)

NEW LEARNINGS

Of the many learnings, it was very apparent that sociability was a key part of what makes rugby special.

Being able to share experiences through unique social occasions was a territory that we focused on as important to rugby supporters and our target audience.

This focus on the innate sociability of rugby and its supporters (in comparison to other mainstream sports has driven our rugby sponsorship comms since RWC 2015 and inspired us to develop a long term platform for all rugby supporters to celebrate this special relationship with the game at Heineken Rugby Club (heinekenrugbyclub.com).

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SUMMARY

By developing a strong campaign, based on a robust supporter centric insight, Heineken was able to activate a communications platform that delivered on commercial objectives by increasing their share of lager market by 7% in the period of the Rugby World Cup. Coupled with this, they were able to massively deliver on their marketing objectives to become the No.1 associated brand with RWC in Ireland. We are not saying that selling beer is like the World Cup, but if it were, we'd be the champions.