

Entry Detail

A01/064 **UNITED KINGDOM**

Title AXE 'EXCITE' – RETURNING TO UNIVERSAL TRUTHS TO CREATE GLOBAL HITS

Advertiser UNILEVER

Product/Service: AXE

Brief Explanation:

A global leader

AXE is the world's leading male deodorant body spray, famous for giving guys the edge with girls. This promise of confidence and seduction is underpinned by great fragrances and a compelling brand idea: The AXE Effect.

New variants drive growth

Axe is tightly targeted at guys as they make the transition from boyhood to manhood. To grow, AXE must recruit new guys to replace the ones that graduate from the brand. The challenge is to remain fresh, interesting and relevant to a new generation of guys each year. A key strategy for recruitment is to launch a completely new fragrance, packaging and communications campaign annually. New variants have importance beyond their launch. They bond guys to the brand and keep them loyal until they outgrow it.

A lost generation

In 2008, AXE launched its most successful new variant of all time, the chocolate scented 'Dark Temptation'. However, subsequent new variants had failed to perform. Our established approach - humorous dramatization of fragrance ingredients, was getting tired. Our campaigns were getting lower levels of market support, losing relevance with consumers and generating lower sales. Failure to act risked a 'lost generation' of guys that would never know the AXE Effect, leaving a hole in the brand's portfolio for years to come.

In search of a global hit

AXE desperately needed a global hit to recover the loss of two previous poor performers. Creativity plays a significant role in the success of a new variant. The creative concept informs the entirety of the presentation of the product, from naming, to packaging, to communications.

Delivering global hits on a consistent basis is tough. To be successful, concepts must build enthusiasm amongst many local country brand managers, be flexible enough to work across channels and of course resonate with a global youth audience. Doing all three is a tough brief.

AXE 'Excite' – Even angels will fall

Reclaiming our lost generation meant moving away from the product-focused strategy inspired by 'Dark Temptation'. We re-committed to the kind of universal insight and globally relevant creative idea that made AXE great in the first place.

In 2011, AXE Angels descended on 100 markets worldwide. Our campaign took a globally recognised, iconic representation of male fantasy and made the biggest claim possible: 'AXE Excite is so irresistible, even angels will fall'. The result was increased sales and a significantly profitable return on investment.
