

Amazon: Man in the High Castle

Problem

How does Amazon successfully announce the launch of its new series?

Solution

Create an OOH takeover on the day of the launch in multiple cities, demonstrating what these locations would be like if the storyline was a reality, ultimately peaking viewers' attention about the series.

Background

Amazon Prime continues to challenge the status quo in the ever competitive streaming service industry. The launch of Man in The High Castle (MITHC) epitomized this ethos, bringing exciting, daring and unique content to the ever growing library of shows that is now accessible on Amazon's streaming platform. The subject matter of the Man in the High Castle is based on Phillip K. Dick's novel that re-imagines the United States in the 1960's and what it would be like had America lost World War II. Throughout the novel, themes of slavery, corruption and the terrible policies of Nazism are brought to life.

The task for OOH was to bring to life this alternative vision of the future. Arguably few other media channels could have done as strikingly. However, with this dark subject matter, there needed to be particular care and attention to the surroundings of OOH while still delivering a far and wide reaching campaign.



Objective

The MITHC brief focused around these core objectives:

Communications Objective:

- Create a wide-reaching campaign that delivers at high number of impressions across both New York and Los Angeles.
- Immerse our audience in what it might feel like to be under control by Nazi Germany
- Attach our messaging to the daily routine of life to ensure creative messaging is hard hitting.

Advertising Objectives:

- Utilize high-frequency formats to drive impression levels
- Create a showpiece creative execution that dominates an area to emphasize Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan control

Strategy

The team developed a multi-layered OOH campaign that achieved the core objective of delivering high levels of reach across both New York and Los Angeles. Utilizing tops, the team was able to deduce what formats helped drive reach and frequency across the marketplace. From the data analysis, the team was still mindful to deliver on the objective of creating an immersive experience. Therefore where possible, they selected formats that were large in scale and were highly visible in the daily routines of the audience. This was to create that feeling of immersion and provide the canvas for the creative agency to deliver striking images.

Based on the data, the team combined dedicated wild postings and bulletins across both LA & New York to deliver a high number of impressions, while also providing impact and stature across street level. In particular, the team selected bulletins in areas that housed high dwell times (intersections/traffic lights) with wild postings, creating synergy with the theme of propaganda posters. This base coverage was further supplemented with large wallsapes in both cities to help dominate certain quarters. With New York, the team took into consideration the movement of people at both street level and underground, so a large number of subway 2 sheets and phone kiosks were planned.



Amazon provided well in advance the creative executions it was planning to run. Utilizing mapping software and local knowledge, the media company was able to carefully select creative based upon its location. For example, the team was mindful to not run a Statue of Liberty creative that showed a Heil Hitler salute in the vicinity of a synagogue, and instead chose a more generic ad to run here. Likewise, every single creative execution was cleared by every single landlord and the MTA in advance. This careful approach ensured the campaign was being sensitive to its surroundings at all times.

While these tactics helped deliver on core objectives, the team wanted to create at least two standout executions that truly elevated the MITHC OOH.

The first showpiece execution came in the form of a five minute takeover of Times Square. On the evening of the show's official launch. In total, fifteen Times Square units were bought with the creative designed in a vibrant red to give the appearance of Nazi propaganda. At precisely 6pm on launch day, all fifteen units activated on a full domination. It is worth pointing out the creative design was completely different and unique vs our traditional OOH creative. The Times Square domination would be the first and only time our audiences would have seen it. To supplement this further, a one day digital activation was implemented across no less than 7,271 screens from Taxi tops, subway screens, newsstands, bus shelters and large scale digital units. In all, this NY take-over for one day ensured the campaign immersed its audience and reflected the propaganda that would have been felt in a Nazi occupied America.

The final showpiece execution was a NY subway train wrap, which cut through the heart of NY, connecting Times Square and Grand Central. This train wrap consisted of a fuller exterior wrap combined with an interior wrap too. It truly delivered on the goal of immersing our audience. The creative execution consisted of symbols used by both Imperial Japan and the Nazi regime. The team wanted to get people thinking just what it could have been like had history taken a different course. In this respect, the team certainly delivered. This particular element of the campaign was debated and discussed across hundreds of publications including the Hollywood Reporter, NBC News, Fox News, Yahoo. In fact, the execution even reached Europe, and Australia, with the BBC, The Guardian, and The Times all providing commentary on the creative execution. While many positive comments were made, the subway train wrap was pulled by the Governor of NY given its sensitivity. No-one could have anticipated the impact this subway wrap would have had, however it clearly demonstrated the power that OOH has on people in their daily routines.

Plan Details

Markets: New York and Los Angeles

Flight Dates: November 2015 - December 2015

OOH Formats Used: Bulletins / Wallsapes / Dedicated Wild Postings / Digital Spectaculars (Times Square) / Subway 2 sheets / Digital Taxi Tops / Phone Kiosks / Digital Newsstand

Target Audience: A18+ / A25 - 54

Budget: OOH received 6% of the budget, which is higher than the industry norm (3.5%). However, it delivered 15.6% of the total plan impressions against the target audience 25-54, proving its broadcast credentials.

The total split of budget for all media was as follows:

OOH = 6% (vs industry norm of 3.5%)

Print = 2%

TV = 54%

Digital = 25%

Radio = 3%

Cinema = 7%

Misc = 3%

Results

The OOH was a resounding success, in particular the subway activation that delivered a substantial amount of earned media in addition to the 264m OOH impressions.

It would be impossible to list every single article and comment that ran in regards to the subway wrap as it would be in the thousands. A google search of “Man In The High Castle Subway Train Wrap” produced no less than 183,000 results.

Audience Metrics

Target Audience TRPs: Los Angeles: Plan TRP = 308 (25-54) & 271 (A18+). / New York: Plan TRP = 1529 (25-54) & 1349 (A18+).

Target Audience Reach: Los Angeles: Plan Reach % = 37.1% (25-54) & 33.7% (A18+). / New York: Plan Reach % = 85.5% (25-54) & 81.7% (A18+).

Target Audience Frequency: Los Angeles: Plan Frequency = 8.3 (25-54) & 8.1 (A18+). / New York: Plan Frequency = 17.9 (25-54) & 16.5 (A18+).

Additional Relevant metrics: Impressions: Los Angeles: Plan Impressions = 24.2m (25-54) & 38.3m (A18+). / New York: Plan Impressions = 139.2m (25-54) & 225.7m (A18+).