

Universal Pictures' The Girl on the Train

Problem

How does Universal Pictures connect with millennials about its upcoming film?

Solution

By combining OOH and Snapchat to create interactive messaging.

Background

Universal Pictures continued to develop new, custom media activations that garnered buzz and appeal in promoting their large blockbuster slate of films every year. It was constantly striving to come up with the “next new thing.” The concept behind *The Girl on the Train* was no different, and was born around bridging the gap between the physical and digital worlds.

Objective

Breaking through the clutter to market a highly-anticipated Hollywood movie required creativity, innovation, and keen audience insights. The company’s objective was to contextually connect and activate the film’s millennial target audience on their daily commute leading up to the thriller’s fall release. As millennials were always on-the-go and hard to reach with traditional media, it recognized the need for a creative approach to tap into their daily lives.

Strategy

Universal Pictures, a longtime Snapchat advertiser, integrated an OOH campaign that encouraged viewer interaction for the first time. The company executed a unique, first-to-market campaign utilizing Snapchat “snapcodes” as a powerful promotional tool. It placed mysterious billboards featuring snapcodes and the cryptic line “What happened that night?” across subway stations in New York, Los Angeles, New Jersey, Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia, and DC. Travelers waiting for their train could interact with creative that referenced the upcoming film through the Snapchat application. Once presented with the ad on subway or train platforms, users could “snap to unlock” special, hidden geotag filters. The nature of the campaign allowed the film to be promoted in a fun, broad, and timely fashion. The mysterious creative was used to capture the attention of and engage the millennial crowd.

Plan Details

Markets: Los Angeles, New York, New Jersey, Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia, and DC

Flight Dates: September 12, 2016 - October 16, 2016

OOH Formats Used: Transit Shelters, Premiere Panels, Subway 2-sheets, Taxi Tops, USKs, Train Wraps, Bulletins, Walls

Target Audiences: Adults 18 to 49 with a female skew

Results

This campaign marked the last attempt to gain attention before the film’s debut. On its first weekend, the movie came in number one at the box office earning \$24.5 million. Numerous trade publications picked up the campaign, including *MediaPost*: <https://goo.gl/bnqT3Y>, *Ad Age*: <https://goo.gl/HQMWfs>, and *Daily DOOH*: <https://goo.gl/QrwOqX>, measuring in at nearly one million consumer media impressions leading up to the premier.

Additional Information

Video of the first-to-market Snapchat Snap to Unlock feature: <https://vimeo.com/215851145>

