

Microsoft's 'Changing the Game' Campaign Wins Responsibility Grand Prix at Epica Awards

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AMSTERDAM—McCann New York is rounding out the 2019 awards season with yet another win, taking home the responsibility Grand Prix at the Epica Awards for Microsoft's "Changing the Game" campaign.

The effort showcases the brand's Xbox Adaptive Controller, a device that makes it easier for people with disabilities to play video games. The campaign, which aired during the Super Bowl earlier this year, features a young gamer named Owen, who was born with Escobar Syndrome. In the spot, he and other children with disabilities share their stories and what they like about the Xbox Adaptive Controller.

A total of seven Grand Prix honors were handed out at this year's Epica Awards, a global competition judged by an international panel of journalists (including this writer) who cover the advertising industry in their respective markets. The winners were announced at a ceremony in Amsterdam tonight.

Film Grand Prix

A four-minute film for Mercedes-Benz won the race in the film category this year. Created by German agency Antoni Garage, the ad shows Bertha Benz, wife of Karl Benz, taking her historic journey from Mannheim to Pforzheim in Germany via

car. Benz became the first person to drive an automobile over a long distance, proving that her husband's invention—the gasoline-powered car—was a viable one. The spot debuted on International Women's Day this year.

Digital Grand Prix

Another campaign from Germany took home the digital Grand Prix. Created by Ogilvy, the social media campaign for Deutsche Bahn, Germany's rail system, encouraged Germans to look a little closer to home when planning their next trip. With help from an algorithm and Getty Images, the brand compared photos of German landscapes and tourist attractions with those from other countries that look strikingly similar (for instance, a picture of a beach in the Netherlands is nearly indistinguishable from one in the German town of Stralsund).

Deutsche Bahn paired these lookalike images side-by-side along with real-time travel prices for both destinations, proving that it's cheaper to take the train around Germany for a weekend getaway rather than splurge on a flight.

PR Grand Prix

A German startup that sells organic tampons won the Grand Prix in public relations for a book it created to make a related point. Earlier this year, The Female Company started selling The Tampon Book complete with stories and illustrations that doubles as packaging for its products. The reason? Books are only taxed at 7% in the country, while feminine hygiene essentials are subject to the luxury tax of 19%.

The brand wanted to find a way to sell its organic tampons at a lower tax rate while drawing attention to the absurdity of menstrual products being classified as "luxury goods." Created by WPP agency Scholz & Friends in Berlin, the book quickly sold out and garnered media attention—and earlier this month, German lawmakers announced that beginning next year, menstrual

products will be deemed necessities and therefore taxed at 7%.

Design Grand Prix

Ikea's "Thisables," a range of products that makes it easier for disabled people to use the retailer's furniture, won in the design category. The add-ons were created with help from a copywriter in McCann's Tel Aviv office who has Cerebral Palsy, and can be purchased in select stores (or via 3D printing). The innovation also won Grand Prix honors at this year's Cannes Lions and Golden Drum Festival.

Alternative Grand Prix

A stunt conducted by Wunderman Thompson Paris took home the top honor in the Alternative category, which includes experiential marketing and other types of advertising that don't fall into more traditional mediums. To drive traffic to Le Drugstore Parisien in Paris, the brand turned its storefront into a parking lot of sorts for Lime's electric scooters by gathering dozens of them overnight and placing them outside.

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