CONTAGIOUS
CASE STUDY

Coca-Cola /

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THE SOCIAL NETWORK
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last December the ColaLife charity partnered with
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But a global presence is not the same as world
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Its headline targets were unequivocally ambitious:
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So what do you have to be willing to do to make
this happen? Well, you have to be ready to shake
things up… /

BRAND DNA
FOUNDED / 1886
HQ / Atlanta, Georgia
EMPLOYEES / 146,200
PRODUCT / Sparking and still ready-to-drink beverages
PROMISE / To refresh the world
To inspire moments of optimism and happiness
To create value and make a difference
WHY CONTAGIOUS / Liquid and Linked: the world’s most valuable brand reinvents its marketing and recognises its place at the heart of the business

CASE STUDY
COCA-COLA / THE SOCIAL NETWORK /

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BY KATRINA DODD
Jonathan Mildenhall is a born agitator. In the stand-out seminar of last year’s Cannes Lions, Coke’s VP for global advertising strategy and creative excellence stood before a packed auditorium to explain how The Coca-Cola Company’s approach to marketing had been ripped apart and rebuilt to help the organisation attain its ambitious targets for growth.

The pursuit of happiness / Rewriting the communications constitution was a fast and dirty process that gathered 40 global execs at Coke’s Atlanta HQ in early 2011. Over one intense week, the team thrashed out Content 2020, a ten-step manifesto that comprehensively reinvented the organisation’s marketing modus operandi: chapter and verse on World Domination, but in a nice way.

Ever since that presentation at the Palais des Festivals, Content 2020 has been conspicuous in its availability. Even for a brand that’s all about sharing, the decision to publish its long-term marketing strategy in the form of a 20-minute animated YouTube video was a provocative act of transparency. The friendly, whiteboard sketchnote-style clip is narrated by Mildenhall, his Leeds accent patiently walking the viewer through the finer points of ‘content excellence’ and what it means to create campaigns that are ‘Liquid and Linked’.

This neat descriptor sums up the dynamic approach captured by Mildenhall and his colleagues: ‘We want to create ideas that are so contagious we actually lose control of where they go,’ he explains. ‘We want to inspire conversation that goes into places we couldn’t even imagine.’ But all, of course, directly linked to the values and objectives that matter to the company’s stable of brands.

LIQUID, LINKED AND LIKED
One of the first major responses to Content 2020 came from as far away from Atlanta as it’s possible to get: Australia. Ogilvy’s Share a Coke (Contagious 31) launched almost by stealth as bottles of Coke bearing 150 of the most popular Aussie first names began to appear on shelves in stores.

Sharing is caring / As the press and public began to catch on, the campaign proper rolled out. Newspaper ads and TVCs showing a montage of volunteered photos of people with the same first name hit screens during Australia’s biggest sporting weekend, reaching around 30% of the total population. The hook was in Coke creating a reason for people to connect with friends and family, or reconnect with those they’d lost touch with. The idea flowed through as
many channels as possible – mobile, Facebook, outdoor, TV, radio – to ensure maximum participation, while mobile kiosks toured shopping centres to cater to less mainstream names.

For Mildenhall the campaign was ‘classic Liquid and Linked. It’s social at the heart, it puts the brand in the hands of our consumers, it’s user-generated content, it’s telling great stories organically’. Better yet, he continues, ‘it’s changing the marketing plan half way through the actual activation because it becomes so popular that we have to call a national referendum on more names to be added to the cans and bottles.’

It also drove sales for that market up by 5%, rising to 7% amongst the target audience of younger consumers.

**ART & COMMERCE**

Mildenhall is passionate about the relationship between creativity and commerce. In the industry crucible of the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity, The Coca-Cola Company (TCCC) this year picked up a total of 30 Lions, spanning 10 categories, including the crowning achievement of not one, but two Grand Prix.

‘We take Cannes incredibly seriously, because it’s a benchmark for excellence amongst this great global peer group,’ he says. ‘We’re only going to be successful if we inspire participation among the world’s most creative minds; I’d much rather have them thinking about Coca-Cola Company brands than anybody else’s. We now have creatives falling over themselves to put their best ideas into our organisation.’

**Strength in depth** / The two Grand Prix in particular highlight the breadth and depth of work through which a brand as old and familiar as Coca-Cola is connecting with consumers across its huge global constituency. The Coke Hands poster from Ogilvy Shanghai, which won top honours in the Outdoor category, is simplicity itself, an iconic graphic idea that perfectly embodies the original brief ‘Sharing a coke’. No translation required.

At the other end of the creative spectrum, a collaboration with Google earned Coke its second Grand Prix, topping the newly-minted Mobile category with a fresh take on the brand’s iconic Hilltop commercial. The reworked campaign picked up on the original lyric ‘I’d like to buy the world a Coke’, creating a desktop and mobile ad interface that allowed users to ‘send’ a can of soda to one of a network of custom-built vending machines across the world.

**LATIN LEADERSHIP**

The ability to produce highly creative work across every conceivable touchpoint in markets as geographically and culturally distinct as China and America has been especially striking this past year. Nowhere, however, has the output been quite so diverse, so consistently inventive as Latin America, a fact not lost on Mildenhall: ‘The correlation between creative success and commercial success has been proven in Latin America. Over the last five years it’s been our most awarded region, and the most consistent growth driver of volume and profit for The Coca-Cola Company.’
The hit factory / In Ecuador, a shopping centre played host to Cascada, a 16-metre interactive virtual Coke waterfall; Nexus Interactive Arts designed the waterfall to ‘play’ with passers-by, generating unique patterns and effects to match their movements. Ogilvy Brasil’s Sprite Shower offered a more literal take on a similar theme. A giant Sprite dispenser was installed on the beaches of Rio de Janeiro to bring the idea of ‘refreshment’ to life in the wettest way possible, drenching those brave enough – or maybe just hot enough – to push the lever.

Sports and music, so often the focus of dreary sponsorship initiatives, also benefit from the region’s apparent willingness to leave no idea – however leftfield – unturned.

In Argentina, Coke’s Cheering Truck, conceived by Del Campo Nazca Saatchi & Saatchi, captured the country’s passion for football, travelling from stadium to stadium to record a million cheers, later played out to boost the national team during the Copa America.

In Colombia, music fans downloaded tracks during a special concert, masterminded by Ogilvy & Mather, Bogota, which began with their favourite band hoisted high above an adoring crowd. As the downloads racked up, the band edged down, until they were finally in full sight on the stage. In another campaign, CCTV footage was scrutinised not for crime but for moments that showed everyday people at their best, with the spontaneous acts of kindness and altruism collated into a montage celebrating the goodness that is often overlooked.

Open door policy / Javier Sánchez Lamelas is VP marketing, TCCC Latin America; his delight in, and commitment to delivering extraordinary value – in all its senses – is clear: ‘The thing I am most proud of is not a campaign, it is the way we work in Latin America to produce high quality marketing.’

In its endeavour to attract the best ideas, Coke has an open-door policy that invites any agency in the region – except those working with PepsiCo brands – to submit scripts and concepts on an ad hoc basis. The result is a kind of creative pantry, stocked with tempting ideas that can be pulled out when the time is right.

Lamelas simply sees this as a pragmatic response to the evolution in his own market and beyond: ‘We are moving from marketing communism – in which marketers were able to push average quality marketing to consumers – to marketing Darwinism, in which people will only see what they want to see.

Javier Sánchez Lamelas

We are moving from marketing communism – in which marketers were able to push average quality marketing to consumers – to marketing Darwinism, in which people will only see what they want to see.

Coke’s flexible approach to working and shares it with a wider audience of potential talent. The Lab’s role is to push existing key partners to use art and technology to reimagine consumer experiences, as well as to engage with experts beyond the marketing world. It might, for example, reach out to Hollywood scriptwriters to ensure storytelling on new content-driven platforms like Coca-Cola.TV and Coke FM is the best it can possibly be.

Agility and adaptability: structured play / The determination to inject new thinking into the heart of its marketing has been matched by Coca-Cola Latin America’s rigour in establishing an internal system that allows it to thrive. ‘We have several secret weapons,’ explains Lamelas. ‘First, we work as one integrated team across all our 35 countries. Our agencies are part of the team. We also work with a horizon of 24 months stock of marketing materials. This gives us time to think and to dedicate resources to innovation. We have clear roles and responsibilities among the different team members. The decision making process is transparent, fast and we delegate as low as we can in the organisation. Our quality standards are high. When you work in Coca-Cola “good” is not enough. We work in a powerful Marketing Factory. It’s a different model than the traditional way of working in a marketing department. We generate greater output, faster with significantly less resources and rework.’

WORKING THE SYSTEM

Content 2020 was Coke’s way of seeding a more dynamic, encompassing and adaptable approach to its communications, but in Latin America the conditions have been created to hothouse that process. Now, in line with the Liquid and Linked approach, Coke has put the framework in place to ensure that success in one region can flow freely to others.

Develop and disseminate / Guy Duncan, global group creative director, Coca-Cola, cites the example of the infamously popular Vending Machine spot, which dispensed Coke and other treats to delighted students. ‘Taking that spot forward, we evolved it into a broader philosophy that we named Where Will Happiness Strike Next? That philosophy has gone beyond film into social media, and has also begun to shape global creative work. The new global programme led by Mexico is all about random acts of kindness and extends to much more than a 30 second TVC.’

In the Philippines, for example, the Coca-Cola brand applied the concept to a project that saw a group of Overseas Filipino Workers reunited with their families back home in time to celebrate Christmas together for the first time in years. It struck a huge, emotional chord throughout the region, and drew over a million YouTube hits in just three weeks.

Establishing the Innovation Lab / The increasing significance of this came through when the company used this year’s Cannes Lions Festival to announce the Innovation Lab: not a physical space, but rather a term that conjures
Today’s culture demands a continual dialogue with consumers, meaning more content, more often to feed the conversation that is 24/7, always on. We have to be more efficient than we ever have before with our production budgets to get the content that we need to feed that dialogue.

David Campbell, global creative director, TCCC

Project ReBrief reimagined the iconic Hilltop ad for the contemporary world, enabling web and mobile users to virtually send a can of Coke from their screen to distant vending machines around the world.

‘Look at the world a little differently’

The Security Cameras clip highlighted random acts of kindness.

A LOT OF CRAZY PEOPLE

FRIENDLY GANGS
Spending split 70/20/10

**Agency Financial Relationship**

'We're still spending as much as ever on advertising, but we're very conscious about the proportion we spend that is consumer-facing and the proportion that goes on agency fees. Our introduction of value-based compensation has helped us feel very confident that we are sharing the risk of creativity with the agencies that provide it, but also that we are rewarding outstanding performance from those agencies that deliver. Agencies have the opportunity to make double the profit than before we introduced it, but likewise if their work isn't performing, that profit is at risk.' Jonathan Mildenhall

**Measuring Success**

The Coca-Cola Company has two key quantitative measures that it uses to measure performance. The first is brand volume, described in terms of 'Unit cases', a unit of measurement equal to 24 eight-ounce (237ml) servings of finished beverage. The second is Brand Love, a metric considered as important as market share to the firm, and of critical relevance to Jonathan Mildenhall and team. The company uses a proprietary tracking tool to quantify Brand Love, interviewing over a 400,000 customers each year across more than 90 of its worldwide markets. The data collected is converted into a metric which can be used to compare performance across different brands, countries and over time. According to Mildenhall, 'No organisation on the planet, other than perhaps political parties, has more sophisticated conversation measurement processes and talent in-house.'
Freedom to create / It helps that Coke is less prescriptive now than previously, working hard to ensure that its agency partners have plenty of scope to bring a local take to the iconic brands they work with. ‘That doesn’t mean to say that anybody can do what they want on any of our global brands,’ says Mildenhall. ‘We are very clear. We have a single brand growth strategy for all the brands, a single brand vision and architecture, and a single creative idea. We’ve moved away from brand “propositions” as old-fashioned thinking. Instead we just have bigger brand spaces, so Fanta is all about Play, Coke Zero is all about Possibilities and Coke is all about Happiness.’

Beginnings not endings / Flexibility within those wide parameters is crucial, and Coke’s global marketing team is focused on infusing it throughout the worldwide system. According to Jackie Jantos, global creative director and self-confessed ‘happiness nerd’, it actually allows their marketing to become much more personal. ‘We used the expression “Don’t tell people a story, give people a story to tell,”’ she explains. ‘We’ve worked hard to move from developing communications about stories and telling stories to actually provoking real, tangible human experiences as part of everything we do. The stories people have to tell coming out of those experiences are far more authentic than anything we could ever tell them.’

CONTENT-DRIVEN MARKETING
That thinking is very much in evidence in Move to the Beat, the Olympics campaign Coca-Cola has masterminded with London-based agency Mother. With the 2012 event widely hailed as the first ‘social’ Games, there was a clear opportunity to create a campaign that not only appealed to a young audience well beyond sports fans, but could be amplified through participation and interaction with its various elements.

Mix and match content / As a result, Move to the Beat is unlike anything Coke has ever attempted since it began marketing around the Olympic Games in 1928. Mother worked with artist and music producer Mark Ronson who was tasked with creating an anthem for the Games. Sampling the sounds created by an international range of young Olympic hopefuls, documentary crew in tow, the track was debuted at a one-off live event in East London that brought Ronson’s athletes and thousands of athletically-inclined teens together for a showcase gig. This was the basis for a range of content specifically designed to resonate around Coke’s global markets, whatever their level of interest in the Games themselves.

The focus on flexibility went further still, says Stephen Butler, creative partner at Mother: ‘The commercial was shot with green screen behind so that local markets would be able to drop their own athletes into the action and become part of the bigger story of the Beat’

More bang for your buck / In terms of production logistics, the nature of the project demanded an entirely new, more collaborative way of working, especially for Coke says Butler: ‘They couldn’t be control freaks. It meant not researching things to the nth degree, not being able to do animatics, but being able to watch the idea grow organically – far more liquid and linked.’

David Campbell, a global creative director for TCCC, sees that change as vital and inevitable. ‘Today’s culture demands a continual dialogue with consumers, meaning more content, more often to feed the conversation that is 24/7, always on. We have to be more efficient than we ever have before with our production budgets to get the content that we need to feed that dialogue. It’s an efficiency play. We have less and less production dollars and we’re expected to do more for it: to do that we have to change the way we work.’

As far as Jonathan Mildenhall is concerned, there is simply nothing to lose: ‘So far everything we’ve done has led to new thinking, but none of what we did couldn’t have been reverse-engineered. The worst case scenario is that we’ll end up with traditional creative content.’

There’s been no reverse-engineering required on the Olympics campaign, which has had buy-in from over 100 markets, doubling the reach of the brand’s Beijing effort. The result in this case is unprecedented for Coke in other ways too, says Butler: ‘Historically, Coke would have signed and sealed everything a year before the event, but even on the eve of the Games we were still in this open creative forum to come up with ideas, to be able to react to things and to feel like we were part of a present tense experience. And we created a toolbox of interesting components that could be adapted or taken in their single bits and pieces, which still held the idea of celebrating the beat without that becoming fractured.’

CONTENT 2020: COKE’S MARKETING API
Taking that toolbox analogy a stage further, it’s not a huge leap of imagination to see Content 2020 as an API for Coca-Cola’s marketing, a move that begins to bring the brand into some pretty interesting company. Project Re:Brief may have made an unexpected couple out of Google and Coke, but there are interesting parallels between these two commercial titans, in terms of scope, scale and significance. ‘We were the world’s first global networked organisation,’ suggests Mildenhall; ‘But I look at Google and think what can I learn from the way they network using technology, the way they network their own human organisation… I just want us to be more dynamic, more innovative and more transparent.’

There’s a curiously ‘Benjamin Button’ aspect to this. As Google and its Silicon Valley siblings begin to wrestle with the logistical and cultural issues that go hand in hand with their rapid increase in size and maturity, The Coca-Cola Company seems to be rolling back the years, rediscovering its mojo and reimagining itself with enviable confidence.

1,404,801
With a score over 1.4 million, Coca-Cola was the highest-rated of the 25 sponsors at this year’s Olympic Games in London. The MediaCom Sport Olympics Tracker scored the performance of each brand on volume of tweets, sentiment, potential reach and engagement.

200 markets
Coca-Cola is available in over 200 markets worldwide. North Korea and Cuba are the only hold-outs.
Size and scale are not incompatible with change and growth, rather they magnify the responsibilities and opportunities for those willing to take them on. ‘We’re in a different world in terms of collaboration, sharing ideas and in terms of the responsibilities of brands as “the new Medicis”’, says Stephen Butler. ‘Brands are the new power seats; they have the financial power to be able to finance and realise ideas and narratives, and they have an audience that they owe it to.’

Catalysing change / It takes chutzpah to nail your colours to the mast in the way Coke did by launching its manifesto in Cannes last year, observes Butler. ‘It made it clear to everyone that this is a Very Serious Edict: World cc’ed.’

But there was method in the madness, says Mildenhall: ‘Building internal capabilities around Content 2020 could have taken me six or seven years – to make all of our business units fully understand how to embrace it, how to practise it and how to manage their agencies on it. But the creative industries responded brilliantly and now they’re helping teach TCCC all around the world how to apply it.’

That’s not to say that the hard work is done. If you consider the cultural and communications changes that were the catalyst for Content 2020, it’s unlikely the years ahead are going to be any less significant. Wendy Clark, Coke’s senior VP of marketing, is clear-eyed about the future: ‘Liquid and Linked represents our point of view on how to successfully communicate in the current landscape. Key in that statement is the word current. By definition, our Liquid & Linked agenda must indeed be liquid and linked itself. Meaning it must be fully adaptable and representative of the communications landscape at any given time. The landscape is anything but static. The mandate we see is that our marketing must be every bit as dynamic as the marketplace.’

The social network / The overhaul of marketing, though, is just one aspect of a wider, more comprehensive mandate for change throughout Coca-Cola, notes Mildenhall: ‘Our CEO says as an organisation we are constructively discontent. We will do to the size of our business what it took us 125 years to do. That means there’s no convention in the organisation that isn’t worth reconsidering.’
ANALYST INSIGHT / COCA-COLA

By Hope Lee, Euromonitor /

The Coca-Cola Company (TCCC) achieved considerable growth over 2007-2011, seeing reported revenue rise from $28.8bn to $46.5bn, an increase of over 61%. The company has a stated aim to double in size from 2010 to 2020.

TCCC’s power base is built upon its domination of carbonates, which comprises almost three quarters of its sales. Bottled water and fruit/vegetable juices are key secondary categories. Coca-Cola is the company’s flagship brand, accounting for over one third of its volume sales according to Euromonitor International. Sprite, Diet Coke and Fanta are also key brands. TCCC has a balanced geographic mix, generating two thirds of its volume sales outside of its established markets in North America and Western Europe.

To achieve its 2020 financial objective, the company is working to defend its position in carbonates in major markets and accelerate the expansion of non-carbonates in both developed and emerging markets. Carbonates generated 71% of TCCC’s total off trade volume sales in 2011, although this percentage has fallen in recent years, down from nearly 77% in 2006, as TCCC has sought to grow its non-carbonates coverage in the wake of challenging carbonates market conditions in some regions, and the ongoing health and wellness trend affecting the soft drinks sector globally. The Coca-Cola brand has been dominant in its category for some time and it is under no threat. However, in some markets, most significantly the US, the category is set to shrink. Consequently, the brand should look for growth in developing markets such as Brazil.

Apart from growing its non-carbonates business organically, the company has also made acquisitions to boost its presence in non-carbonates, including Honest Tea, Innocent and Zico coconut water. Euromonitor International expects TCCC to continue to set its sights on well-performing, small but strong niche brands, especially in developed markets where there is a shortage of large-scale acquisition candidates. TCCC has the full capability to nurture and grow these newly acquired small brands by leveraging its bottling, distribution and marketing networks. The expansion of Innocent, originally a UK-based brand, in Europe reflects this. Compared to PepsiCo, TCCC seems markedly stronger in marketing and growing a local brand. The surge in sales of Minute Maid Pulpyp in China was another successful marketing story.

The key issue is that consumers are demanding – or are advised to consume – a diversity of drinks. All manufacturers need to strengthen their core business, as well as carry a wide range of drinks to spread the risk. TCCC seems on the right track so far.

Hope Lee is senior beverages analyst at Euromonitor International, London. www.euromonitor.com
To optimise The Coca-Cola Company’s marketing in support of the goals laid out in Muhtar Kent’s Vision 2020 roadmap.

- Specifically to double the revenue generated worldwide to $200bn by 2020 and to more than double the number of servings to over three billion per day.
- To expedite a transformation in TCCC’s marketing while maintaining a consistency of spirit across core brands in all markets.
- To win ‘a disproportionate share’ of popular culture by being ‘constructively discontent’.

Senior global marketers worked intensively to produce Content 2020, a strategy in tune with the fast-evolving digital and social landscape. Its ten step manifesto outlined a new approach that could be applied consistently throughout TCCC system.

The public launch of Content 2020 expedited change throughout the Coca-Cola system. It also gave its agency and production partners a mandate to innovate and tough creative standards to hold the company accountable to.

For Coke, content drives conversation. But a more rigorous approach to logistics and planning is essential to maximise the content generated, both in terms of volume and its adaptability across markets.

Being receptive to ideas, whatever their source, and being willing to collaborate internally and externally to build and develop creative is crucial in helping the brand pull off adaptable, timely campaigns.

The global marketing team are passionate advocates for Content 2020. Internally, colleagues run training workshops as well as taking on speaking engagements, acting as ambassadors for the Liquid and Linked methodology.

While Coke commits 70% of marketing spend to ‘bread and butter’ traditional marketing, markets allocate 20% to campaigns that drive local relevance and 10% to innovative ideas that ignite interest and start conversations.

### CHALLENGE /

- To optimise The Coca-Cola Company’s marketing in support of the goals laid out in Muhtar Kent’s Vision 2020 roadmap.

### SOLUTIONS /

#### STRATEGY

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#### TRANSPARENCY

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#### CONTENT

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#### ADVOCACY

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#### BUDGETS

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Our growth comes directly in line with the prosperity and growth of our markets. They are interconnected. At our best, we leverage global scale while staying deeply rooted in and connected to our local communities. As long as we keep these two aspects of our business connected we will meet our ambition of refreshing the world and making a positive difference.

Wendy Clark, SVP marketing TCCC
RESULTS /

$13.09bn
Q2 results for 2012 show that TCCC is on track to meet its Vision 2020 goals: posted revenue for Q2 was $13.09bn, just above the $12.98bn forecast.

35%
India’s Q2 volume growth for Coca-Cola as a standalone drink was 35%. The company will invest $5bn by 2020 to further develop this key market.

TAKEOUTS /

> Leveraging transparency has helped drive a step-change in Coke’s marketing that could have taken years to implement.

> Publishing Content 2020 not only inspired third parties to approach TCCC with ideas, but laid out upfront the criteria required by the corporation. It also made the internal team publicly accountable for implementing the change.

> ‘Command & Control’ is no longer an option. Collaborative creativity and the flexibility to change tack when required is key.

> Experience counts: ‘Almost all of our programmes try to leverage a specific experience of happiness, so that we’re not creating a communication, we’re getting people to act with us around an experience.’ Jackie Jantos

> The sense of common purpose at TCCC is palpable. ‘This is a really phenomenal time for us. We feel it and we feel the responsibility to take it forward as well.’ Guy Duncan

'Over the last five years Latin America has been our most awarded region, and the most consistent growth driver of volume and profit for The Coca-Cola Company.'
Jonathan Mildenhall

6m
Security Cameras video viewed over six million times in five weeks on YouTube

4%
Volume growth worldwide was 4% for the quarter

Coke has more than doubled its awards tally from the Cannes Lions, from 12 in 2011 to 30 in 2012, including two Grand Prix.

Q2 Volume growth for TCCC sparkling beverages

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Q2 Volume growth for TCCC sparkling beverages

180m
Consumers submitted 180 million of their own ‘beats’ via a dedicated website, surpassing the goal of 100 million

320m
The mini-documentaries released in China as part of the Move to the Beat Olympics campaign racked up 320 million views in just two weeks.