

Louder Than Words: Rock, Power, and Politics Exhibit

Problem

How does a museum raise awareness for its new exhibit?

Solution

By creating an OOH campaign that showcases artifacts from the museum to create intrigue.

Background

“Louder Than Words: Rock, Power, and Politics” was a partnership between two museums, the Newseum in Washington, DC, and the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland, Ohio. It was a one-of-a-kind exhibit that explored how rock music could change attitudes about patriotism, peace, equality, and freedom. Through iconic artifacts, compelling images, and multimedia experiences, the exhibit examined how music has influenced issues ranging from political campaigns to civil rights. It was open for viewing in Washington, DC, on January 13, just a week prior to the 2017 presidential inauguration. Before opening in Washington, the exhibit was on display in Cleveland at the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame during the same time period as the Republican National Convention. “Louder Than Words” provided the Newseum with a unique opportunity to appeal to the masses by unusually pairing rock and roll with issues of free speech and politics. The exhibit included artifacts from artists such as Jimi Hendrix, Bruce Springsteen, Madonna, the Village People, John Lennon, Bob Dylan, and Queen Latifah. This gave the Newseum the components it needed to create a suite of advertisements capable of appealing to a broad range of interests and demographics. When developing the advertising creative, a significant challenge was that only a few artifacts were licensed for advertising use. In one particular case, the artifact also required the artist’s approval. The company was also unable to use images of the artists in the design. The creative agency had to develop an inventive concept that included only artifacts it had permission to use. Once each piece was selected, it was paired with a catchy headline designed to draw people in.



Objective

The client’s primary objective was to use the exhibit to increase attendance at the Newseum. All media elements were targeted at locals and tourists who were already in the Washington metropolitan area. The campaign was focused on reaching music enthusiasts, political “junkies,” families, millennials, baby boomers, educators, and tour operators. The artifacts that were chosen for the campaign represented a variety of musical tastes that spanned over several decades. Since music is a personal preference, the advertising agency knew it needed to cast as wide of a net as possible to maximize its audience.

Strategy

The Newseum put together a comprehensive media plan that included print, digital, radio, television, podcast sponsorship, and OOH advertising. The client viewed OOH advertising as an opportunity to appeal to multiple demographics simultaneously by displaying a variety of different artifacts. The budget for the OOH creative included bus exteriors, digital bus shelters, digital bill-

boards, and metro advertising (two sheet posters, fare gates, and car cards). For bus advertising, the client opted to go with a more substantial presence by placing creative on kings with headliners. The buses traveled through highly trafficked downtown areas and tourist spots, in addition to the suburbs. The campaign was originally supposed to include at least one metro station domination close to the Newseum to reach regular commuters and visitors. Unfortunately, the budget wasn't large enough. Instead, the client opted to pair fare gates with a series of two-sheet posters in 10 metro stations around the National Mall and heavily-trafficked tourism areas. This gave the same effect of domination and showcased creative that would appeal to multiple target demographics. There were car cards in 10 percent of the metro cars once people passed the two-sheet posters and fare-gates. All six artifacts were incorporated into the metro display. The digital bus shelters and digital billboards rotated between different creative and were posted at hotels, malls, and other popular destinations.



Plan Details

Markets: Washington, DC, and formerly Cleveland, OH

Flight Dates: January 9, 2017 - February 12, 2017

OOH Formats Used: Bus kings with headliners, rail car cards, two-sheet posters, fare gates, bus shelters, digital billboards

Additional Formats: Print, digital, radio, TV, podcast sponsorship

Target Audiences: Music enthusiasts, political junkies, families, millennials, baby boomers, educators, tour operators

Budget: \$613,111



Results

The Newseum saw a 10 percent increase in attendance and an 18 percent increase in revenue during the campaign's lifespan. January had the largest year-to-date attendance change, with a 78 percent increase from 2016 to 2017. January also had the most impressive revenue change, increasing 99 percent from 2016 to 2017. *The Rolling Stone Magazine*, *The Washington Post*, *Washingtonian*, *Smithsonian Magazine*, and *WUSA9* all mentioned the campaign.

Testimonials

The OOH creative undoubtedly created a buzz. People visiting the exhibit commented on the "Louder Than Words" advertising, and the Newseum saw several individuals posting about the campaign on social media.