



YOUNG LIONS COMPETITIONS

17-21 JUNE 2024

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UNSTEREOTYPE ALLIANCE MEDIA BRIEF

Muscles, money, misogyny. Let's rewrite how young men are seen.

Background

The Unstereotype Alliance is a thought and action platform that seeks to collectively use the advertising industry as a force for good to drive positive change all over the world. Convened by UN Women, the United Nations entity for gender equality, the Alliance contributes to empowering people in all their diversity (gender, race, class, age, ability, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, language, education, etc.) and addressing harmful stereotypes in advertising to help create a more equal world. The Alliance works for gender equality across the gender spectrum, including the LGBTQ+ community and healthy portrayals of masculinity.

The Challenge

The Unstereotype Alliance, collaborating with 240 member organisations globally, has been committed to eliminating harmful stereotypes from advertising since 2017. We've made notable strides in how women and girls are portrayed, but the representation of men and masculinity has largely stagnated or regressed over the past 75 years based on Getty Images research.

There is a huge mismatch between what men think makes them successful and how advertising portrays it. Research shows that 51.3% of men think that media is likely or very likely to negatively affect how successful they feel (BBD Perfect Storm New Macho. '[The price of success 2023](#)'). Young men are particularly affected by this. Contributing factors include a rise in regressive attitudes towards gender equality among young men, a growth in 'manfluencers' who promote regressive and violent gender ideologies and a rapid decline in the mental health of young men and boys.

We need a powerful media strategy that reaches young men and presents a more diverse, contemporary understanding of success for them.



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Target Audience

Primary – Gen Z men (aged 18–27) who spend their downtime in digital spaces and on social media (watching content on YouTube, reading/participating in conversations on Reddit, gaming and chatting online)

Roughly 94% of Gen Z will stream video in 2023, as per an EMARKETER forecast, with YouTube and Netflix as the top free and paid platforms, respectively.

Podcasts are also gaining popularity among Gen Zers, with podcast listening projected to rise significantly by 2027.

Gen Z is all about gaming, showing higher engagement rates than previous generations. This generation's media habits reflect a clear shift towards digital experiences and interactive content.

Insight

Men are asking advertisers for new ways to depict aspiration. For most men today, success is about feeling happy in their day-to-day lives, having good relationships, taking care of their health and wellbeing and having a life partner who loves and supports them.

When asked, "How did you define success when you were younger and how do you define it today?", the top two answers for a sample of 18–75-year-old men from the UK and the US were:

- Younger: 23% – making lots of money
- Today: 22.6% – feeling happy and content about my day-to-day life

They want ads that make them feel happy, motivated and inspired – not respected, powerful, and rich, which seem to be the sentiments many brands aim to evoke in luxury goods, skincare, fashion, and other categories in their quest to build brand aspiration.

Adjusting this has a positive impact on culture and on brand equity and sales power.



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Strategy

The Unstereotype Alliance is calling for a reimagined vision of success – one that’s defined by who you are, not what you have.

Think about where these unrealistic images and messages about men’s masculinity are in the media today. What approach can be used that can be executed on the media channels that resonate the most with the target audience to achieve maximum impact?

Imagine that Unstereotype Alliance will have a film and image/print campaign available soon. We want this campaign to reach as many young people in the most effective way so they take a moment to listen to us.

Key Message

Every man has his version of success. Let's show him that many versions are possible.

Personality

Authentic, Open-minded, Positive, Pragmatic, Realistic.

Campaign Dos and Don'ts

Don't

- vilify any one expression of gender or depiction of masculinity/femininity
- present men criticising other men
- present feminism or gender equality as a threat to men
- call out specific brands/ads for being ‘bad’
- refer to masculinity as ‘toxic’.



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Do

- present positive and pragmatic alternatives that authentically reflect what success means and/or looks like to men
- be constructive and instructive
- widen the aperture of what success looks like
- bring Gen Z together through this campaign – we currently see the greatest divide in ideologies between Gen Z men and Gen Z women than ever before; it's imperative that we don't widen this gap and pitch them against each other.

Specific deliverables

Teams are asked to create an innovative media strategy that answers the brief. Teams must demonstrate how they intend to use selected media channels, how they will encourage engagement, how they will make use of emerging media and how they will unearth consumer insights to drive the most compelling communication strategy.

Required submission:

- a PDF presentation – no more than 10 slides, describing your creative campaign.
- a digital presentation image – a visual overview of your work concisely summarising the brief
- a four-part written submission – to give more context to your work. This includes:
 - background – overview of the brief, objectives etc
 - creative idea and insight – including market research and data gathering
 - strategy – target audience, media planning and approach
 - execution – implementation, media channels, integration, timeline and scale.