

Grand Prix winner Havas Creative Middle East's 'Liquid Billboard' for Adidas

 By [Jessica Tennant](#)

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As part of our Loeries post-event coverage, we interviewed some of this year's Grand Prix winners. First up, our interview with Havas Creative Middle East on their Liquid Billboard for Adidas.



Talking us through the campaign, how they went about addressing gender equality in sports, and what they believed made it an outstanding piece of work are GM Fabio Silveria and ECD Joao Medeiros...

Congrats on your Grand Prix win! What does this mean to you and the team involved?

Thank you! The Loeries are a major recognition and its impact goes way beyond Africa and the Middle East. We were already thrilled with the excellent performance we had in the festival this year, the Grand Prix highlights even more the quality of the work and the team behind it. We are, of course, extremely proud of having such an outstanding piece of work, but can say that we are much prouder of the people behind it. Those that invested their time and talent in bringing the Adidas Liquid Billboard to life and in making Havas Middle East one of the best agencies in the Loeries 2021.

What do you attribute the win to

The win is the result of a great client-agency partnership, grounded in trust and in the constant search for creative ideas that resonate.

“ The Liquid Billboard reflects a great client brief, a brand with a clear and strong purpose, and a marketing team that is brave enough to do something that hadn't been done before. ”

From Havas perspective, we are on a constant search for ideas that have a positive impact on the world, that are meaningful by definition and that, of course, raise the bar on creativity and innovation. The billboard manages to do it all. But beyond a clear vision and a culture to inspire innovation, the case wouldn't exist without the teams - marketing, creative, production - that worked so passionately on it.

■ How did you go about this campaign?

The initial insight for the campaign was the fact that, in the Middle East almost 90% of women don't feel comfortable swimming in public. Almost three times the world's average.

The challenge was to create a piece of communication to highlight the issue, and raise awareness to the launch of the new Adidas conservative swimwear collection - a piece that would be part of the broader "Beyond the Surface" campaign and an initiative of the brand's commitment to close the gender gap in sports.

The solution was to create the world's first swimmable billboard. Made to encourage every woman in Dubai to become ambassadors of Adidas's new inclusive swimwear collection, irrespective of their shapes, ethnicities, abilities or religion. Inviting women from Dubai to physically dive in and become part of the global conversation.

■ Tell us what it was about / how it worked?

The five-meter high and three-meter deep that doubles as a fully usable swimming pool capable of holding 11,500 gallons of water, was built in less than three weeks.

The structure was fitted with special underwater cameras that transformed every woman's experience into personalised Adidas posters, and live-streamed every dive on the city's largest digital display at Dubai Mall.

Women who've only seen athletes and models on billboards, saw themselves celebrated the same way. Breaking down personal and societal barriers to finding their confidence in water.

■ What advertising medium was used, i.e. OOH? Why did this make the most sense?

The most iconic piece of the campaign was the billboard. It quickly became the talk of the town and gained the whole world in articles and social media posts. However, the campaign went far beyond a single placement in a beach in Dubai. Due to the nature of the activation, social media and PR were a key part of it, and the reach and engagement that the piece generated wouldn't be possible without the integrated approach to comms from the early planning stages of the campaign.

■ Comment on the impact of the campaign / the results.

Within a week, the billboard started a global conversation about inclusivity in swimming across more than 50 countries. With one single placement in Kite Beach, Dubai, the billboard reached more than 350 million people in more than 60 countries across 6 continents. Articles were translated to numerous languages and the brand's inclusivity message was a point of conversation around the world. The new collection launch was a tremendous success in sales and the sentiment towards the brand extremely positive on social media.

■ Why are/were you proud to be part of this campaign / project?

Beyond the recognition of our creative peers, the campaign was also a success with the public. Highlighted in publications that cover lifestyle and economy, in countries as diverse as USA and Korea. But perhaps the main reason to be proud is the realise that with the power of creativity and with a single placement, we were able to discuss gender equality in sports in more than 60 countries. To represent a purposeful message and raise awareness to a problem that, although more pressing in our region, is universal and needs to be discussed.

■ ***Are there going to be any follow up versions of the campaign / any next steps? Any exciting plans in the pipeline?***

Adidas platform for gender equality in sports spans across many markets and campaigns, and we're sure that the brand will keep on its purposeful mission. As one of those many initiatives from the brand, Havas Middle East has recently launched the "Action Speaks for Itself" in South Africa, Egypt and the GCC countries. The campaign, for the launch of the brand's new Hijab collection, makes a statement for all women to pursue their path in sports and beyond, without compromising on faith, freedom or movement.

■ ***What do you think will make winning work stand out in 2022?***

The pandemic was not the only force shaping the upcoming communication trends - but was definitely a relevant one. More than ever, it is expected from brand to have a point of view, a purpose, to some of the societal issues we go through.

Communication and creative festivals from around the world recognize ideas that make a difference on gender equality, environment and social issues, "for good" and even specific awards around the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

But beyond creative recognition, having a purpose impacts the essence of what a brand represents. At Havas, we know the importance of meaningfulness. We know that people would not care if 75% of brands disappeared. And we know that the brands that make a difference to people's lives are the ones that have a positive impact not only to individuals, but that also connect on a collective dimension - on social and cultural levels.

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