

Microsoft Bing: Decoded

NEW YORK, US: Bing ropes in younger audiences on the back of Jay-Z's autobiography launch.



Challenge

Microsoft's search engine Bing launched in 2009 - into a market dominated by Google - and remained stagnant despite a massive, multi-million dollar advertising campaign. Bing needed to increase usage and position itself as a modern choice.

Microsoft needed to shrink the Google market share chasm by becoming more relevant with a youth target. The challenge was to shift perception among a younger target to make Bing the search engine built for today's generation, and to grow usage of this new alternative to Google.

Insight

The brand realised that young people's attachment to Google is habitual, not emotional. If there was a better search engine, they considered it more, but they could not simply be told something else is better. They had to experience it.

Further, the brand ascertained that Google may have captured attention for technology innovation, but it lacked cultural capital. It had little equity in entertainment or music or art. Thus, Bing decided to create a non-traditional experience for consumers, and to wow them with innovation.

Solution

Bing identified the upcoming launch of American singer Jay-Z's autobiography called Decoded, as the perfect opportunity to create a compelling experience that would demonstrate the power of Bing Search and Bing Maps on a very large scale with the target audience as Jay-Z resonated with youth like no other entertainer. He wanted to launch his book unlike any other book in history, and wanted technology to be at the heart of that.

A digital gaming experience, built directly on Bing Search and Bing Maps, allowed fans to discover each and every page. These unique placements were accessible to everyone, regardless of their physical location.

Bing started by putting every single page of Jay-Z's book into media spaces around the world. The pages weren't randomly placed. All 350 actual pages were strategically put in locations relevant to each individual page's content. Fans around the world could walk Jay-Z's path, experiencing his story right where it actually happened. The campaign used a variety of outdoor media all over the world, including high-profile placements in Times Square, the Vegas strip and London's Covent Garden.

And if the media didn't exist, Bing created its own, including everything from pizza boxes, plates, burger wrappers, jigsaw puzzles, and t-shirts. Fans sought out, discovered and interacted with this collection of unique, small-scale pieces, such as printing a page of lyrics from Jay-Z's track 'Big Pimpin'" on the bottom of the pool at Miami's exclusive Delano Hotel, featuring a page on the stage curtain of the Apollo Theatre, and a page as a bronze plaque in the Marcy Projects where Jay-Z grew up. Bing even collaborated with Gucci to create an exclusive jacket with a page stitched in as the lining, which was featured in the window of their flagship Fifth Avenue store.

Results

During the month that Decoded was live, Bing.com had a 10% increase in traffic. Overall market share in search that month went up to 11.5%, an increase of 1.7% over the previous month. Intent to Use Bing increased by 15 points among the target audience. 71% of visitors to the Decoded site who were Jay-Z fans expected their usage to increase. 25% of people who went to Decoded migrated from light usage of Bing to medium usage, and 9% migrated to heavy usage.

Over 1 million people visited Bing and spent an average of 11 minutes playing Decoded. Decoded had six times the expected online buzz, with a total of over 9,000 social media mentions with aggregate positive sentiment at 9%, higher than any other Microsoft marketing campaign to date. PR drove over 500 unique placements in broadcast, online and print news outlets.

Decoded generated 1 billion media impressions and had a value two times the investment.

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