

IMC Campaign Critique

Microsoft:

#MakeWhatsNext

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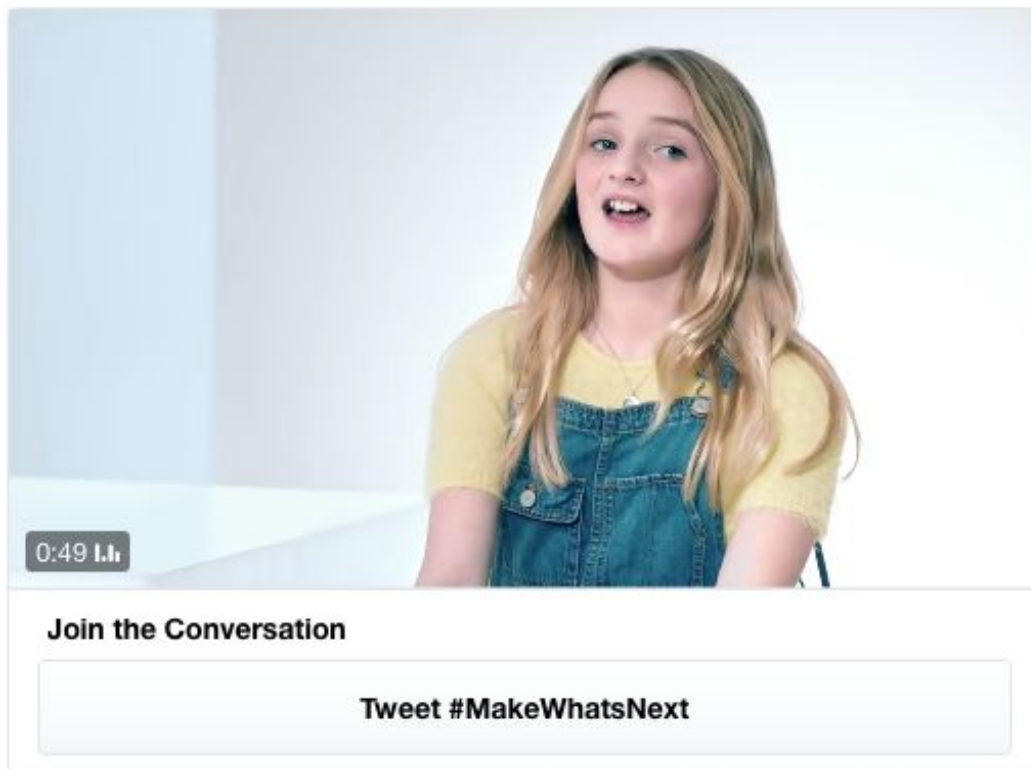
20th March, 2017

1. The Brand

The brand being marketed in the #MakeWhatsNext campaign is Microsoft, one of the world's largest tech companies. Microsoft's #MakeWhatsNext campaign urges young women to pursue jobs in STEM (science, tech, engineering, math), a field that is traditionally dominated by men. This campaign positions Microsoft as a corporate leader in the quest for gender equality in the workplace.

2. Message Delivery

I first encountered this campaign as a video on Twitter, and later again on YouTube as a video ad that played before the YouTube video. Microsoft launched the ad on TV during popular news shows such as "GMA" on International Women's Day, March 8, 2017 (#IWD2017). The company ran the TV ad for two weeks following International Women's Day, simultaneously promoting the video with paid social media ads on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram. Microsoft also deployed Twitter's conversational ads (pictured below) to encourage users to tweet the video with the message "Change the world, stay in STEM. #MakeWhatsNext."



3. Promotional Disciplines

Microsoft employed a variety of IMC tools in conjunction with strategic brand partnerships for their #MakeWhatsNext cause marketing campaign. To launch the campaign, Microsoft's emotional television spots premiered during prime-time morning news shows on the widely-covered International Women's Day. The video conjures up feelings of inspiration and hopefulness in viewers by shining a light on the unadulterated dreams and passions of some brilliant young ladies. The short film brings attention to the lack of females in STEM careers, stating only 6.7% of women graduate with STEM degrees. When Microsoft shares this fact with some young girls with big dreams, the heroines are all the more inspired to pursue their dreams and make their mark in history. With the tagline "Change the world. Stay in STEM," the campaign encourages young women to be inventive and #MakeWhatsNext. Microsoft promoted the ad on TV and social media for the two weeks following International Women's Day. The timing made the video all the more shareable on social media, as tech companies and female leaders shared the video with followers in a show of #IWD2017 pride.



The screenshot shows a Twitter post from the official Microsoft account (@Microsoft). The post includes the Microsoft logo, a verified badge, and a 'Follow' button. The text of the tweet reads: "Change the world, stay in STEM. #MakeWhatsNext #IWD2017 ♀ bit.ly/MWN17". Below the text is a video player showing a woman looking at a screen with the text "ODDS ARE YOU WON'T SOLVE THESE PROBLEMS" and "ONLY 6.7% OF WOMEN GRADUATE WITH STEM DEGREES". The video player shows a progress bar at 1:01 / 1:30. Below the video, the tweet is captioned "#MakeWhatsNext: Change the Odds". The engagement statistics show 3,165 retweets and 6,255 likes. A row of user avatars is visible below the statistics. The timestamp at the bottom of the tweet is "6:05 AM - 7 Mar 2017".

Microsoft 
@Microsoft 

Change the world, stay in STEM.
#MakeWhatsNext #IWD2017 ♀ bit.ly/MWN17

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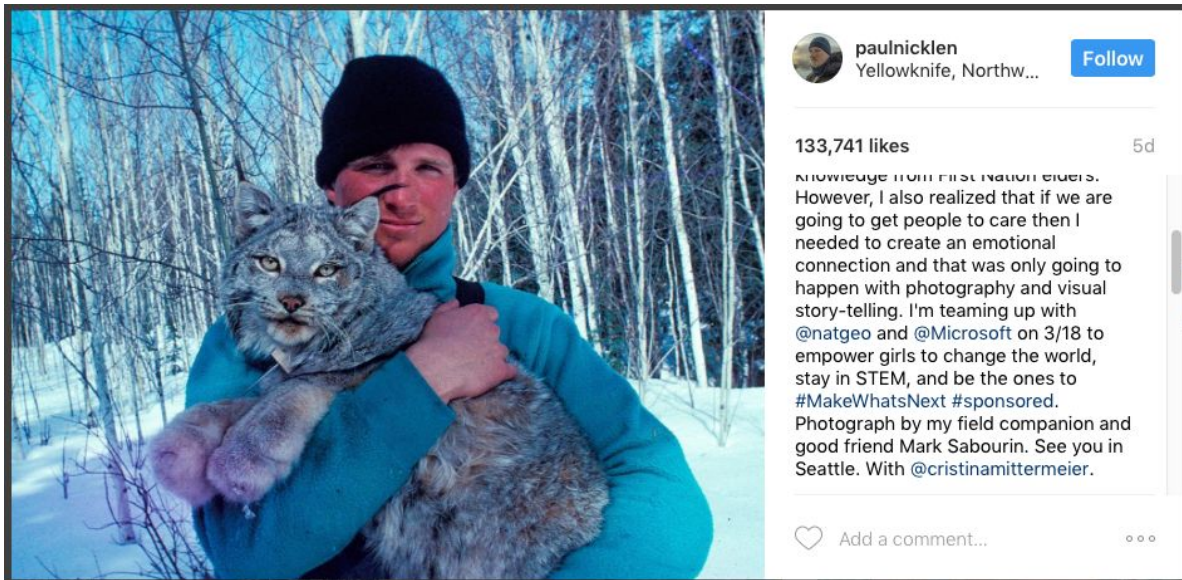
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In partnership with National Geographic, Microsoft pursued a social guerilla marketing strategy to promote the #MakeWhatsNext workshop, an event held on Facebook Live and in select Microsoft stores designed to bring together women in STEM. National Geographic live-streamed interviews with three popular explorers, who also promoted the event on their personal social media accounts. By connecting with such widely respected social influencers, Microsoft gained expansive promotional exposure from accomplished female STEM leaders, giving the campaign a richer sense of authenticity.





National Geographic photographers Jenny Adler, Christina Mittermeier, and Paul Nicklen shared their stories with young ladies at the #MakeWhatsNext workshops that went down in six US Microsoft stores and via Facebook Livestream Video on March 18.

Young women could then go to Microsoft's MakeWhatsNext.com to see how they could turn their passions into a world-changing career in STEM, using a platform powered by LinkedIn. Microsoft also promoted its various youth education and community involvement events on this site, inviting visitors to get involved.

4. Primary Message

The primary message in this campaign is directed at young women and it is simply stated: "Change the world. Stay in STEM." This campaign slogan presents a clear and multi-layered primary message because it perfectly captures the sense of both inspiration and urgency that Microsoft is trying to create around this cause. The upfront message is that young girls should not only pursue, but stick with and thrive in a STEM career. The word "stay" implies that girls show interest in STEM careers early in life, but ultimately obtain degrees in other fields. This language serves to challenge and embolden young women determined to achieve big things in STEM. The message also creates the association that STEM workers have the power to change the world, inspiring young women to explore how a position in STEM could help them reach their dreams. The short, terse nature of the tagline serves to inject the issue with an elevated feeling of pressure and seriousness.



What do you think the value of diversity is?
mnc.ms/nTyQk1 #MakeWhatsNext



5. Secondary Message

The secondary message underlying the primary message of this campaign is that women are responsible and capable to not only step up and fill the gap in STEM education, but to change the world. The commanding, short syntax of the primary message calls young women to be motivated and determined to succeed. #MakeWhatsNext

serves to empower girls' creativity, encouraging them to be inventive, curious, and bold in their ventures. Microsoft's workshops and other resources provide young girls with a place to get involved and step up to fill the gap in STEM education. Microsoft wants to close the STEM gender gap - but only motivated and intelligent women as a group will be able to actually correct the gender imbalance. Therefore, the secondary message conveys the importance of the power and responsibility that girls hold in changing the world through STEM.

6. Target Audience

Demographics: The primary consumer segment this campaign is targeting is middle-class girls, teenagers, and young women of all cultures, ages 8-20, members of Generation Z. These are the women who live and breathe online and are positioned to step up and close the STEM education gap, as they are pre-college age and still learning. The secondary consumer segment this campaign is targeting is middle-class, 30-45 year-old, parents who likely saw the campaign on television or social media.



Psychographics: The campaign specifically targets intelligent and motivated young ladies who aspire to change the world. This group receives excellent grades in school and is highly involved in extracurricular and community activities. These women often surround themselves with a strong, dynamic support system of family and friends who can support them in their pursuit to change the

world. Unafraid to step up and take charge of her work, the target is curious, fearless and bold. She is not simply a dreamer, but a doer. She is responsible and uniquely determined to succeed.

7. Existing Behavior

The first fully digital natives, Generation Z has never experienced a world without internet. Microsoft is a well-known, lifelong friend to them, as many grew up using Microsoft programs in a school or home setting. Their world is full of the promise of technology, and their dreams know no bounds. They know how to use technology to get any and all answers, and 50% of them are expected to obtain degrees. This generation is ready and motivated to educate themselves and do work that will change the world. Gen Z is especially motivated, with 4 out of 5 Gen Z members believing themselves to be more driven than their peers. Gen Z members are therefore likely to respond eagerly to Microsoft's call to empowerment thanks to the brand intimacy they shares with Microsoft, their desire to change the world, and their unique determination. This will also likely strengthen the brand sentiment Microsoft shares with Gen Z as they turn working age and explore career paths.

Women in Generation Z are growing up in an environment where traditional gender roles have evolved and women are now claiming a place in the workforce. There are countless women who have already paved the way for the girls of Generation Z to have access to the opportunity to achieve their dreams. Having grown up in the era of accelerating climate change, Gen Z is

hyper-aware and passionate about global environmental and social issues. Microsoft's campaign effectively taps into this passion to reach Gen Z on a deeper level.



8. Competition

Gender equality and female empowerment is pervasive in modern advertising. Today's women are loyal to brands that understand and cater to women, rather than taking them for granted or treating them like they are stereotypes. Femvertising is becoming mainstream as advertisers increasingly build campaigns around strong and accomplished women. I thought it would be most effective to compare #MakeWhatsNext to like-minded female advertising.




Always #LikeAGirl campaign stands out as a having a similar style and message as Microsoft's #MakeWhats Next. The overarching goal of the Always campaign is to change the way

our culture uses the phrase #LikeAGirl so that it holds a strong, positive connotation. This campaign is very similar to #MakeWhatsNext in how it leverages digital technology, and specifically uses the power of hashtags to craft an emotional resonance worth sharing. Both campaigns also feature confident girls having an honest and open dialogue with the interviewer or cameraman. Although both campaigns proved wildly successful on social media, #LikeAGirl generated significantly more buzz with an astonishing 65 million views on YouTube, compared with Microsoft's 7 million views. Always continues this campaign on their #LikeAGirl Epic Battle website, where the company lists various sports-related youth programs that the brand funds to empower young women. The company also hosts a confidence summit to bring together young women in a community.



Another feminine campaign that generated a lot of buzz is Dove's Real Beauty Sketches. This campaign aimed to empower adult women to appreciate their natural beauty as a source of confidence rather than doubt. This spot was high-concept and long-form, which made for a more sharable and impactful video. Dove's Real Beauty Sketches was uploaded to YouTube in 25 languages, effectively generating 163 million views across the planet. The primary message of this campaign illustrates that the way women perceive themselves is dramatically different than the way others perceive them. The powerful image of the two sketches side-by-side drives this message home in an intimate and tangible manner. Dove's campaign reaches consumers in a fragile place, and prompts more of a realization rather than an action. The target audience for Dove's Real Beauty Sketches spans a diverse group of adult women, engaging a much larger audience than Microsoft's #MakeWhatsNext. The company pursued a mass paid advertising strategy on social media, generating awareness and capturing the attention of earned media providers who then spread the message further. Rather than sending consumers to a website, Dove used their social media to bring together a community of women who could connect and



voice their real beauty stories, struggles, and triumphs. Dove's brand activism strategy took off and created a resurgence of not just attention and interest, but passion and devotion, from customers for an otherwise stale brand.

9. Effectiveness

With an estimated reach of 91 million people, Microsoft's 2017 #MakeWhatsNext campaign was incredibly effective at generating awareness of the lack of women in STEM. In launching the campaign as part of the #IWD17 conversation, Microsoft was able to promote relevant content and boost campaign impact. Microsoft beautifully leveraged their partnership with National Geographic to reach a broader, more engaged audience on social media. Media giant National Geographic was recently named #1 brand on social media based on follower and engagement metrics. For #MakeWhatsNext, NatGeo posted a total of 30 photos to their 6 social media accounts, collectively earning 3.5 million likes on International Women's Day *alone*. Consumers are highly engaged with the brand's high-quality social media content. The breathtaking imagery and educational captions have immense stopping power on today's oversaturated social media platforms. Microsoft was able to convey a distinct sense of authenticity by crafting its sponsored posts around real human experiences and sharing the stories through the voice of an admired brand with a strong social media presence.

From a consumer perspective, the campaign was something to talk about. Consumers are continuing to share the video to this day, as this campaign is very recent. As I write this, the video actually gained almost one million YouTube views in the past two days alone, currently sitting with almost 9 million views. Unfortunately, there has been a lot of consumer speculation around the fact that "only 6.7% of women graduate with STEM degrees," as viewers find the language to be misleading. The speculation raises concerns over whether Microsoft is misleading or simply flat-out lying to young women. Nonetheless, the spot is still receiving massive amounts of attention and stimulating the conversation around women in STEM. Over 1,000 pieces of audience-generated content have been posted to Instagram using #MakeWhatsNext. Thousands of consumers are happily sharing the campaign to start a larger conversation around women's role in society and history. Microsoft did not just inspire young ladies to step up in STEM, but also managed to develop an emotional connection with their brand for the broader market. #MakeWhatsNext effectively communicates Microsoft's core values and inspires young women to step up in STEM, something that Microsoft can eventually benefit from when these motivated young women join the workforce.

Appendix A



Links to main campaign videos:

#MakeWhatsNext: Change the Odds: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yjahbGqZu6U&t=27s>

#MakeWhatsNext Change the Odds TV spot: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y5soEtBwH0Y>

#MakeWhatsNext Be the Solution: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R5rfveLKg3c>

#MakeWhatsNext The Numbers: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NYD_pTc-YHs

#MakeWhatsNext Find the Cure: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TKfvKzYn9r4>



Resources



<http://www.adweek.com/brand-marketing/microsoft-urges-girls-to-stay-in-stem-and-change-the-world-in-third-year-of-makewhatsnext/>

https://www.slideshare.net/sparksandhoney/generation-z-final-june-17/49-4911_Tell_your_story_a_cross

<http://info.maccabee.com/blog/the-new-wave-of-fem-vertisements-5-female-empowerment-campaigns-we-love>

<http://www.adweek.com/digital/report-national-geographic-is-the-no-1-brand-on-social-media/>

<http://mediakix.com/2017/03/instagram-case-study-microsoft-national-geographic/#gs.1kCD5AQ>