

**THE REAL
COST OF
BEAUTY
IS GREATER
THAN YOU THINK**

MARKETING SOCIETY AWARDS



Ogilvy

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Having successfully updated our long-term brand strategy in 2021, Dove had found a winning formula that was pushing the brand to new heights, while delivering record growth. In Reverse Selfie and Toxic Influence, Dove had created two campaigns that built meaning and difference in a category that was full of brands saying the same thing. We had also identified a cultural tension that not only had longevity, but could also inspire provocative creative work. In short, we had achieved everything we could have hoped.

But there was one hiccup. Toxic beauty content was still harming the mental health of 3 in 5 kids.

Our new strategy, which was working so well for our brand, was not necessarily working as hard for the girls we were trying to help.

After two years of learnings, we came to a new realization. Children cannot be responsible for moderating content in the face of algorithms designed to grab and keep their attention. Our warnings, no matter how salient, were not enough.

And with a majority of parents now of the belief that legislation was the only way to change things, we sought a change in approach. We now understood that we would need to do more than warn girls.

Our approach was to sound the alarm more clearly than ever on the mental health crisis facing girls and advocate for a change in how they were exposed to toxic beauty advice. With this came our boldest move yet, endorsing a piece of political legislation that sought to protect teenagers online. Our campaign would advocate for the passing of The Kids Online Safety Act, a bipartisan bill introduced to the United States Senate in 2022.

Our goal was to mobilize the masses by creating a shareable film and get viewers to sign the petition to support the Kids Online Safety Act (KOSA).

Our creative idea was centred around a 3-minute hero film which told the story of Mary, a real girl who almost lost her life from an eating disorder. We showed how her downward spiral was prompted after getting her first phone and joining social media.

The campaign also drove consumers to the Dove website encouraging viewers to lend their support for our campaign for legislative change by signing a petition in support of the Kids Online Safety Act.

The result was a campaign that not only delivered results for the brand that were on par with what we had achieved with our previous two Masterbrand campaigns, while also generating significant momentum for KOSA.

Cost of Beauty proved its cultural relevance by achieving 6.6 billion impressions in the US. It moved the needle on key Dove brand metrics and it achieved huge commercial success, resulting in a 5.5% increase in value sales.

WHAT WAS THE CHALLENGE YOU FACED

Since 2021, Dove has been on a mission to radically update our 20-year-old strategy. Our brand belief, launched in 2004, that beauty should be a source of confidence, not anxiety, was still true. But it was no longer cutting edge, it was no longer dynamic, and it needed to be sharpened to remain relevant in a completely new world.

Slowly but surely, other brands had muscled in on our territory. Standing up for women’s confidence was something every brand wanted to do. Equally, the beauty category had undergone enormous change. Social media had proliferated unattainable beauty standards, meaning girls could no longer avoid them. Beauty products, hacks, treatments and expectations were all being beamed into the feeds of teenage girls, and they were unable to cope.

In 2021, we sharpened our core brand belief, resulting in a new approach that looked to make a greater impact in society. Reverse Selfie became the first example of our new ‘actionist’ strategy. Our approach had shifted from encouraging women and girls to see their true beauty, as we had done with Sketches, Choose Beautiful and Patches, to fighting the emerging external forces on social media that destroyed self-esteem.

The Dove Self-Esteem Project (DSEP) was central to this approach, providing educational materials that helped girls and parents, as well as being a clear Brand Do for Dove, showing we were prepared to back up our words with action.

Two years on, our approach has created highly successful campaigns such as Toxic Influence and Reverse Selfie which have shined a light on overlooked threats to self-esteem and beauty confidence.

Our 2021 Strategic Shift

FROM


Taking on the critical inner voice & encouraging women & girls to see their true beauty

TO


Fighting the external forces on social media that destroyed self-esteem



WHAT WAS THE CHALLENGE YOU FACED

But despite the success, there's a problem with this story. Despite the success of the campaigns, the reality is the situation has not significantly improved for young girls, with the mental-health crisis still raging.

And while our 'actionist' stance appeared to be working for the brand, the true test of the approach is whether it works for real girls in the real world.

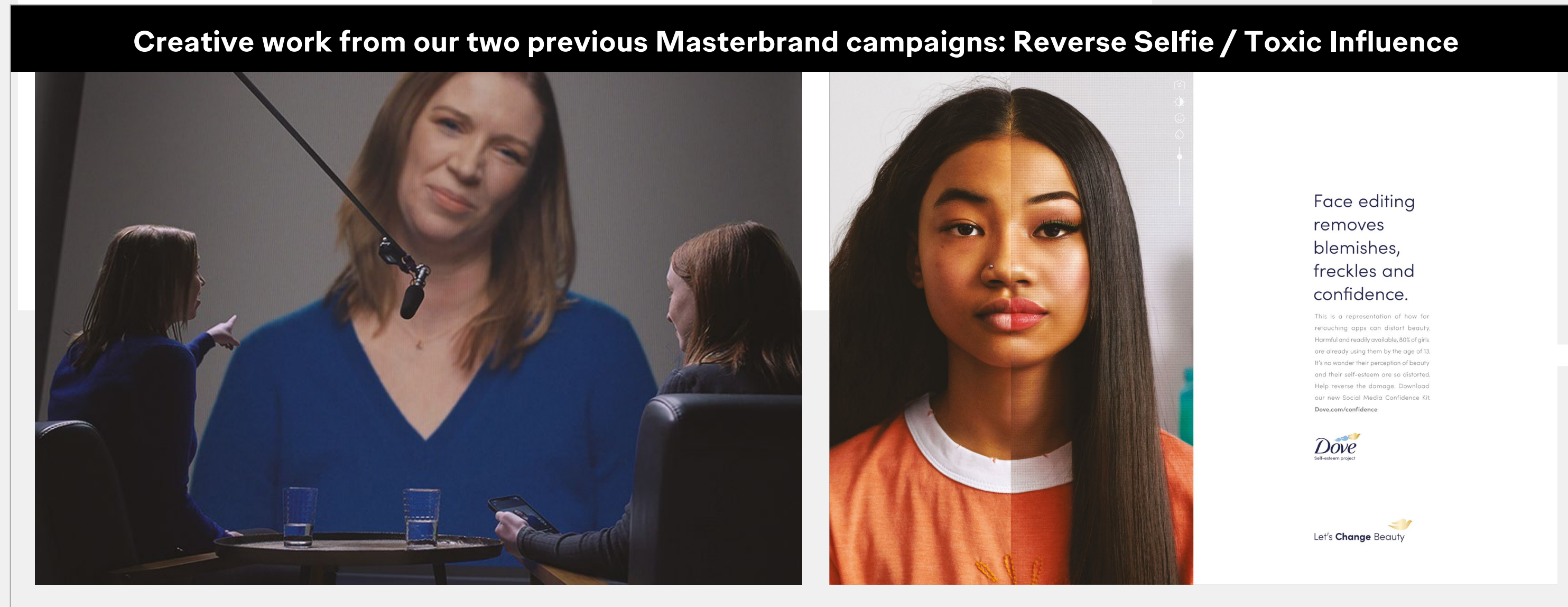
While our campaigns aimed to equip parents with the tools to help, 39% of parents still find it difficult to moderate their child's screen time¹.

Despite our efforts, toxic beauty content was still harming the mental health of 3 in 5 kids².

If we were truly to be the 'actionist' brand we aspired to be, we would have to go beyond

merely raising awareness of these toxic beauty issues. We would have to attempt to make a real change and become more interventionist than ever.

Enter Cost of Beauty.



WHAT WAS YOUR DESIRED OUTCOME?

In simple terms, our goal was to achieve everything we have managed to achieve from a brand building and commercial point of view from our previous two Masterbrand campaigns (Reverse Selfie and Toxic Influence), while also attempting to create a lasting impact that would be felt long after any the campaign ended.

While we are immensely proud of the work we have done in previous years, we wanted Cost of Beauty to also lead to more concrete change in society in our biggest and most important market, the United States.

Our research in relation to toxic beauty content had led us to the Kids Online Safety Act (KOSA). The bill, which had been proposed by congress members in the US has sought to protect girls from the harms of social media. The bill supports updating social media design standards, safeguards and tools to better protect kids' overall experiences online and limit their exposure to toxic beauty content.

Senators Richard Blumenthal & Marsha Blackburn promote KOSA

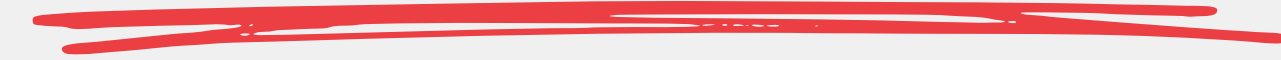


With our brand committed to bringing positive change in beauty and making social media a more positive place, we believed we had a responsibility to act and support a safer environment on social media, helping protect young people's mental health.

This became our most ambitious goal in Dove campaign history. To create a lasting impact by advancing the cause of a radical piece of political policy.

Our first objective was to drive petition signatures and encourage viewers to endorse to bill. A signature represented the recognition that our audience understood the scale of the problem and endorsed our belief that legislation needed to change.

But for any Dove Masterbrand campaign to be a success, it must follow effectiveness principles. Our next step was to build out additional campaign objectives using our Dove effectiveness ladder.



WHAT WAS YOUR DESIRED OUTCOME?

Dove Masterbrand effectiveness ladder

Use Dove's unique POV on beauty esteem to engage in the world & culture of beauty

Drive activist brand metrics by delivering social value & sparking change in society

Build brand power & increase penetration

Create commercial value

FAME

Our next objective was to drive fame and create mass reach. To ensure we would achieve the necessary scale to drive change, we set ourselves ambitious targets in paid and earned media impressions. Our aim was to surpass the huge 3.1 billion US impressions achieved as part of the Toxic Influence campaign.

KEY BRAND ATTRIBUTES

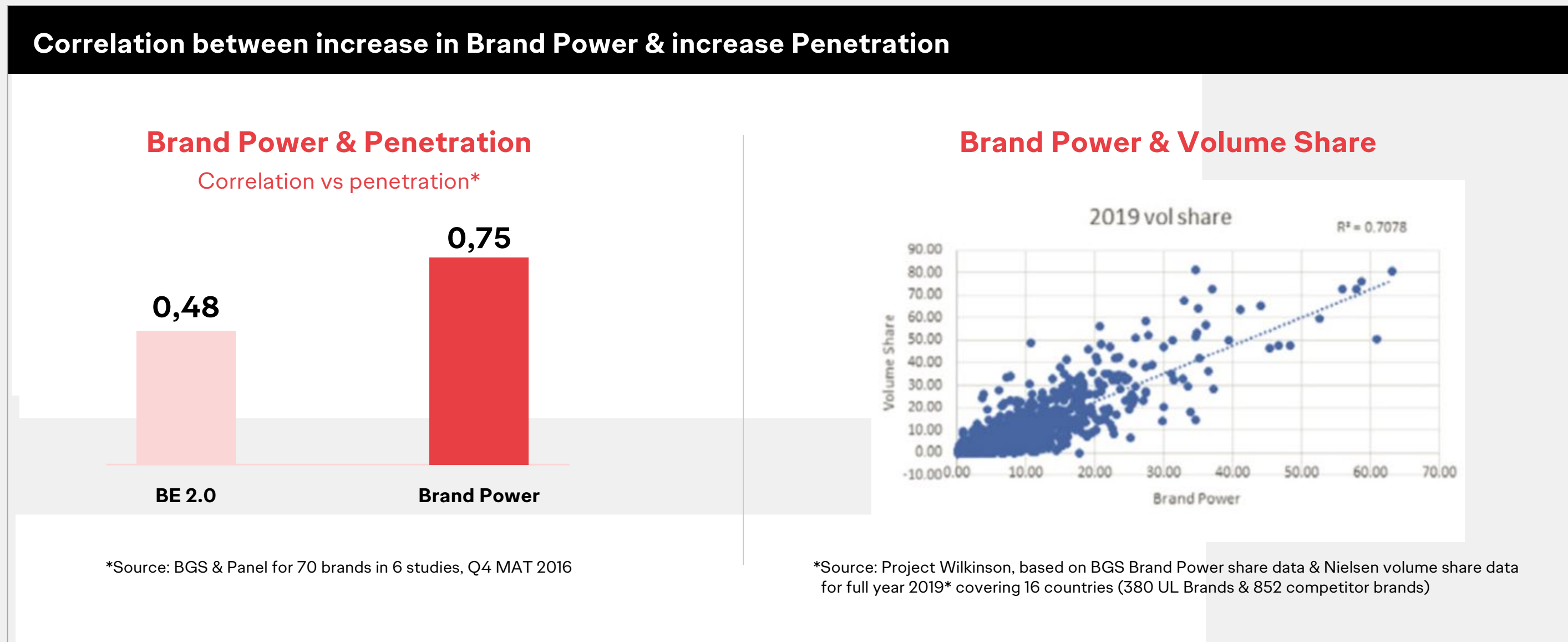
We also needed to prove the message was landing in the right way with consumers and a key part of our strategy is to continue with our ambition to appear as an 'activist' brand.

This meant measuring ourselves against key attributes designed to track perception of Dove as a brand that stands up for women's confidence. For this campaign we aimed to grow this key purpose metrics by more than 2% - the benchmark we achieved for Reverse Selfie (2020).

SALES

Despite our many socially driven objectives, we demand that even purpose campaigns must drive commercial value. With the personal care category largely stagnant, but expected to grow slightly by 2.43% in 2023³ our target was to at least double this growth. This meant increasing cross category value sales during the campaign period by +5% (rounded up from 4.86%) compared to the same period the year before.

WHAT WAS YOUR DESIRED OUTCOME?



BRAND POWER

In order to achieve this sales growth, we follow the Kantar Brand Power model. Kantar has shown a correlation between increased Brand Power and increased penetration and they estimate that the average brand grows its Brand Power by 0.6% per year⁴. Our aim was to at least double that and increase Brand Power by +1.2%.

PENETRATION

And following on from building Brand Power, we hoped to grow our sales through increased penetration. The Kantar model shows a correlation of an increase of 0.48% in penetration for every 0.75% growth in Brand Power. For this campaign, as we aimed to increase Brand Power by 1.2% (double the annual average for all brands) we ended up with a target of at least a +0.736% increase in penetration.

HOW CREATIVE & INNOVATIVE WERE YOU IN YOUR APPROACH?

// DID YOU PUSH BOUNDARIES? // WHAT DID YOU DO DIFFERENTLY?

We have known since Reverse Selfie that social media is causing 6 in 10 girls to feel worse about themselves⁵. But until now, we had hoped we could change things by helping girls help themselves.

Our two previous toxic beauty campaigns warned girls about the dangers of social media while attempting to arm them and parents with tools to navigate toxic beauty on social media.

But despite our efforts, the onslaught of toxic beauty advice on social media was unrelenting. The constant bombardment was making young people suffer. Rates of depression, anxiety, and self-injury had surged in the early 2010s, as social media platforms proliferated, but despite greater awareness, trends were not changing. In fact, research undertaken by the Dove Self-Esteem Project Research for Kids Online Safety revealed things were continuing to get worse.

The shocking set of statistics revealed that:

- **80%** of young people believe that people their age are addicted to social media.
- **51%** of young people (ages 14-17) have been exposed to content encouraging restricted eating or disordered eating behaviours.⁶

Most shockingly of all was that 3 in 5 kids experience a mental health issue from toxic beauty content. Toxic content on social media is fuelling a mental health crisis that is spinning out of control.

After two years of learnings, we came to a new realization. Children cannot be responsible for moderating content in the face of algorithms designed to grab and keep their attention. Our warnings, no matter how salient, were not enough.

Parents agreed. Over half (58%) of American parents believed the only way to get social media platforms to change was to implement legislation in the space.⁷

While Toxic Influencer & Reverse Selfie had been successful for the brand, we would need a new approach to create the same impact for teenage girls.

With this realization came a change in approach. We now understood that we would need to do more than warn girls. We would have to push for a legislative change in how they were exposed to toxic beauty advice.

Our goal was to mobilize the masses by creating a shareable film and get viewers to sign the petition to support the Kids Online Safety Act.

58%

American parents believe legislation is the solution for social media platforms⁷

HOW CREATIVE & INNOVATIVE WERE YOU IN YOUR APPROACH?

// DID YOU PUSH BOUNDARIES? // WHAT DID YOU DO DIFFERENTLY?

The bill, which received bipartisan support, aims to curb the harms associated with social media use by forcing providers to protect children.



Dove Cost of Beauty launch event

Our brief was twofold:

1. Highlight the scale of the social media-induced mental health crisis among kids.
2. Inspire the world to act, demand change, and save kids from the consequences of toxic beauty content.

Once again, we would use real stories to expose the shocking reality of toxic content, as well as the human cost being born out on children, creating a wave of emotion that would increase the pressure on policy makers to act.

From the brand, this would be the most ambitious example of our 'actionist' strategy. Our hope was that it would become our most culturally relevant campaign yet, continue to drive positive brand associations, and fuel further growth.

The campaign kicked off with a live-streamed launch event designed to generate earned reach.

The event featured talks from experts and youth advocates on the importance of the issue and calling everyone in the United States to back legislative change.

The event was also attended by Lizzo who added her voice to the choir and posted her appearance on her Instagram.

The event also saw the first preview of our Cost of Beauty hero film which was the centerpiece of our campaign.

The 3-minute hero film told the story of Mary, a real girl who almost lost her life from an eating disorder. The film shows how her downward spiral is prompted after getting her first phone and joining social media. Set to an emotional female cover of Joe Cocker's 'You Are So Beautiful to Me,' we see how quickly social media shapes Mary's view of her beauty, causing her mental health to struggle. At the end, we learn this isn't just Mary's story. It's the story of millions of girls.

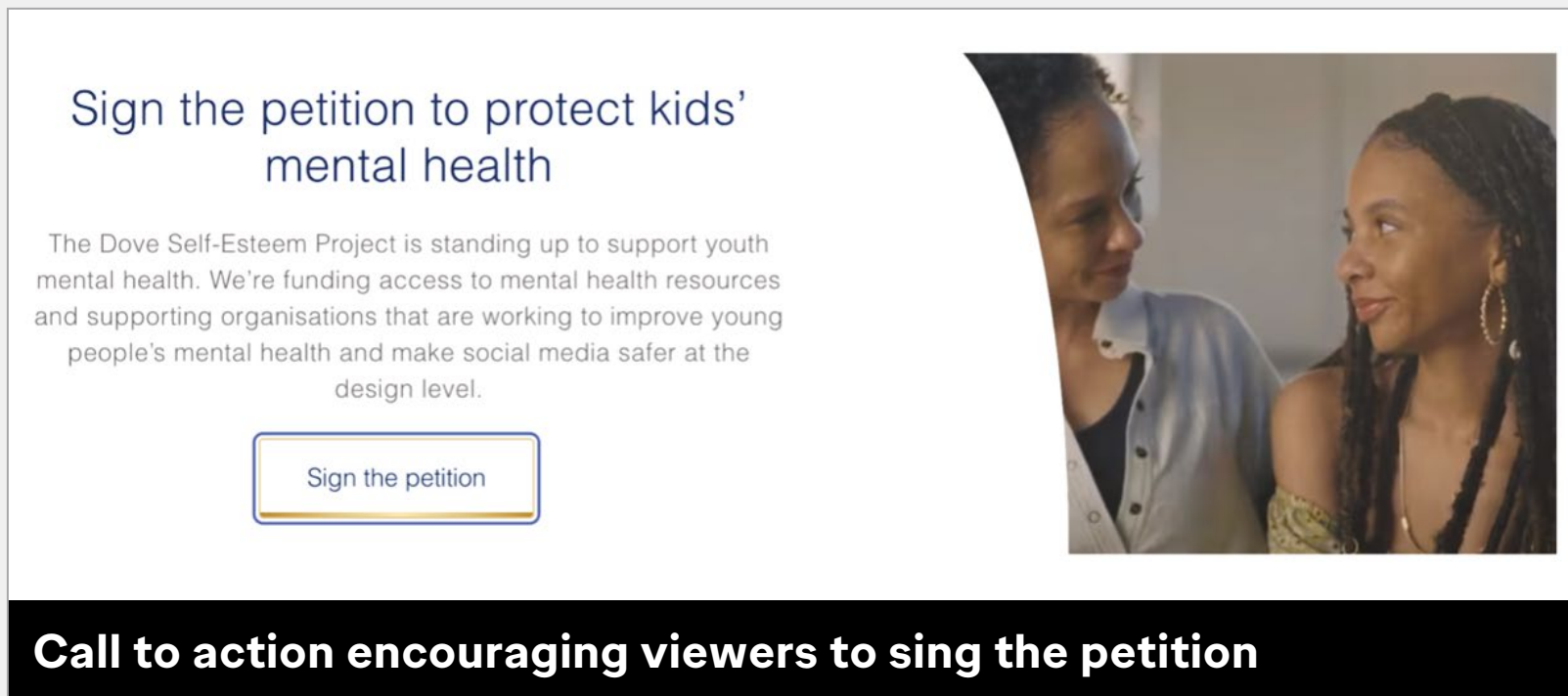
HOW CREATIVE & INNOVATIVE WERE YOU IN YOUR APPROACH?

// DID YOU PUSH BOUNDARIES? // WHAT DID YOU DO DIFFERENTLY?

The film was supported by print and social assets which used real examples from girl's real social media feeds highlighting the everyday toxicity they were exposed to.

Our plan was to use the emotional storytelling of our hero film to trigger and inspire action, while other assets provided more information and showed the scale of the problem.

Our campaign assets then used a call to action and featured a link to the Dove website, encouraging viewers to lend their support for our campaign for legislative change by signing a petition in support of the Kids Online Safety Act.



WHAT RISKS DID YOU TAKE?

Even for the standards we have set in the last few years, this was a particularly risky campaign. Our shift to becoming an ‘actionist’ brand in the last few years has placed us in more dangerous territory, forcing us to take firm sides on contentious issues emerging from the world of social media.

The debate has only intensified in the US since we first raised our voices. Many US states are now considering banning social media amongst under 18s, leading to passionate arguments on either side. And the intensity of the debate is a microcosm of the extreme division that exists within the world of US politics.

Yet that is exactly the world we chose to step into. Anchoring our campaign to a piece of policy was an enormous risk for a variety of reasons. While KOSA was written as a bipartisan bill, endorsing it took the message out of our control. In such divided times, there was a risk that our intentions could be taken out of context, recast or misunderstood.

We also knew that even at the best of times, politics can be messy and require compromise. No bill will ever be perfect for all stakeholders, and this was

no different. In the weeks after we endorsed the bill, a number of organisations and activist groups criticized the bill and our involvement with it. Critics worried that KOSA could potentially lead to censorship of LGBTQ+ content. But while we understood these risks beforehand and sympathized with the counter-argument, we still felt endorsing the bill was the right thing to do. However, that’s not where the risks ended.

Our hero film which was the key to the campaign’s success also created risk. The emotional resonance of Mary’s story was crucial in creating a movement and inspiring action. That meant authenticity was essential, and we chose to use footage Mary already had. Using her own photos, videos, and journal entries, spanning over a decade, we captured the agonizing reality of seeing a teenager enduring a mental health struggle.

However, using such raw footage opened the door to critics who may have felt it to be inappropriate. Our view was that using such shocking images was the only way to make our point.



And in a darkly ironic sign of the problem, the biggest backlash we faced was from the social media companies themselves, who believed our film violated some of their operating rules. The same companies that were exposing girls to toxic beauty content were uncomfortable with our campaign. The circumstances forced us into post-launch pivots and replanning.

WHAT WERE THE MEASURABLE RESULTS?

Earned coverage highlights from the campaign

Logos and headlines from various media outlets including Marketing Dive, Yahoo!, SELF, Teen Vogue, Daily Mail, AdAge, Billboard, Allure, Parents, Hypebae, and others, all related to the Dove Self-Esteem Project.

Campaign wrap-up chart with details of our media performance

- The campaign was a huge success. We far exceeded our benchmarks set against Reverse Selfie and Detox, reaching nearly 2x the amount of target impressions across Earned, Owned (was 2x the target) and Paid (was 20x the target).
- The highlight was the Cost of Beauty long form film (3 min) being viewed 38 million times (27MM from Paid Media and 11MM from organic) total across all channels!

KPI	RESULT	TARGET	LEARNINGS AND NOTES
TOTAL Earned + Owned + Paid Impressions	6.6B+	4.6B	Driven largely by Earned and SMT, exceeding target with Paid and unexpected number from Owned Organic as well!
Earned Media/Press Impressions	3.7B	3.5B	Impressions saw above target performance due talent Lizzo, alongside strong press release pick-ups of 2 separate releases
Owned Impressions + Views	21MM	1.6MM	When purpose content resonates with a clear audience and is supported by paid, it has the potential to significantly boost the performance of our organic social channels.
Paid Media Impressions + SMT	2.7B	1.1B	Due to platform policy changes paid media had a few setbacks at the onset of the campaign. We executed paid SMT, adjusting the paid media plan and shifting money into specific platforms, we were able to exceed our target.

Our results show a clear line of effectiveness from campaign engagement right through to sales growth. At each stage of our effectiveness chain, our results correlate and combine to tell the story of a hugely successful campaign.

Moving down the chain, the campaign proved its effectiveness at creating social value, generating a huge number of petition signatures.

Brand Power and penetration also grew, showing the campaign was contributing to key metrics that are proven to correlate with commercial impact.

Finally and most importantly, our sales figures increased with volume sales growing ahead of the category.

All in all, our results tell the story of a campaign that was effective at every touch-point. We proved yet again the power of having a strong brand and we showed how purpose can be the backbone of this brand strength, creating social impact while generating commercial value.

F A M E

At the top of the chain, we measure impressions, and here we find a campaign with record reach, huge cultural relevance and talkability. The campaign significantly outperformed our target, achieving 6.6 billion US impressions.⁸

In paid media, we achieved 2.7 billion impressions, outperforming our media buy by a whopping 245%, while earned media saw us generate an equally huge 3.7 billion impressions.



8) Mindshare & Edelman impressions data

WHAT WERE THE MEASURABLE RESULTS?




Key brand attributes

The brand then clearly benefited from the social value created, correlating with growth for Dove associations with key ‘actionist’ attributes:

- “Inspires women to feel more positive about the way they look” +5%⁹
- “Dove uses real women” +15%¹⁰
- “Which brands is raising awareness about toxic beauty content” +8%¹¹

Commercial results

BRAND POWER

Our campaign correlated with Brand Power growth of +7pps as we grew our Brand Power to a record high of 

Kantar estimates that the average brand grows its Brand Power by 0.6% per year, meaning our campaign correlated with growth that was more than 4x greater than average.

9) Kantar, Brand tracking data

10) Kantar, Brand tracking data

11) YouTube, Campaign sentiment tracking

12) Kantar, Brand tracking data, 2021 Q2 – 2023 Q2

WHAT WERE THE MEASURABLE RESULTS?

PENETRATION

As predicted by our increase in Brand Power, our target increase in penetration of +0.736% was dramatically surpassed with the campaign achieving a huge increase of +4% household penetration amongst our target audience.¹³

SALES

And finally, we also saw an impact on sales during the campaign period, which saw an increase of 5.5% in value sales, more than doubling our target.

The result was an increase in value sales of over



With a media budget of \$11.3m this gives us an ROI of 1:2.6.

Other campaigns running during the campaign period were product-focused that would normally run and did not see any larger media investments compared to the previous year.

Additional societal objective:

Having decided to advocate for the passing of the 2023 Kids Online Safety Act (KOSA), we set ourselves an additional target to achieve 50,000 petition signatures in support of the bill.

We also believed that petition signatures would be a clear measure of success. A signature represented the recognition that our audience understood the scale of the problem & endorsed our belief that legislation needed to change.

We reached over 101,000 petition signatures, more than double our ambition¹⁵ and put significant pressure on lawmakers to act.

The pressure meant that in July 2023, the bill passed unanimously through the Senate committee on Commerce, Transportation and Infrastructure, taking it a step closer to being signed into law.

While we still await the final step, we believe this result shows our voice has already advanced this important cause.



13) Dove Multi Retailer Penetration tracking

14) Dove internal IRI sales US: 04/23 – 07/23 vs 04/22 – 07/22

15) Dove website tracking

HOW DOES YOUR WORK ADVOCATE THE REPUTATION/IMPORTANCE OF THE MARKETING INDUSTRY?

This is the 3rd major campaign that Dove has launched at the Masterbrand level since we made a strategic shift to focus on detoxifying the world of beauty and fighting threats to self-esteem seen on social media. In each year since we began executing this strategy, we have seen our Brand Power grow year-on-year to record levels and we have recorded continuous sales growth. In the same time-period (2019-2023), Dove is also the only brand in the top 20 mass Beauty and Personal care brands in the US, to grow its Retail Sales Value.¹⁶

This campaign is the latest to clearly demonstrate marketing effectiveness and show that when executed properly, marketing is one of the most powerful drivers of business growth.

The campaign also created a huge social impact. We have seen for a number of years how brands can use purposeful marketing to drive positive change in society. Dove and Unilever have been at the heart of that movement. However, at a moment when purpose marketing seems to be going out of fashion, Cost of Beauty proved it could not only remain successful, but also set more ambitious goals than ever before.

The idea that a brand could spark a huge cultural conversation, create lasting commercial value and even contribute towards a legislative change that may end up protecting girls for years to come, all in one campaign, is surely one of the clearest demonstrations of the importance of the marketing industry.



MARKETING SOCIETY AWARDS



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