



This entry was submitted by Havas Middle East on behalf of Pampers team in UAE dated on April 30, 2025

**Executive Summary (500 words maximum)**

Premature birth is a traumatic experience for families, filled with uncertainty, fear, and isolation.

1 in 10 babies are born premature, yet education around preemies remains limited.

Parents are often exposed to social pressure, misinformation, and even blame, compounding their emotional burden at a time when support is needed most.

And while hospitals focus on the medical needs of the infant, the emotional well-being of parents is often overlooked.

Pampers saw an opportunity to step up, not just as a diaper brand but as an emotional support system for those overlooked parents.

“Joy Has Come Early” was a first-of-its-kind direct intervention that reached parents at the precise moment they needed comfort, the birth of their premature baby.

The heart of the campaign was a beautifully illustrated book of reimagined lullabies, written as messages of hope and resilience. Delivered directly to neonatal hospitals across the UAE, the book aimed to bring reassurance to parents who felt overwhelmed and alone.

Complementing the physical book was an audio playlist of the lullabies, recorded by a preemie mom and backed by a mother’s heartbeat, which is scientifically proven to calm babies and foster bonding. The playlist was made available across more than 30 streaming platforms, ensuring both reach and accessibility. Launching during World Prematurity Awareness Month gave the campaign maximum cultural relevance and visibility.

The campaign drove 90% positive sentiment among preemie parents and neonatal professionals, and the brand saw a 5.7x increase in brand mentions in neonatal care discussions. The brand was present in the largest NICUs in the UAE, and the playlist was accessed in over 180 countries. Social engagement rose significantly through organic sharing and influencer participation.

**SUBMISSION (2000 words maximum, headers and references don’t count)**

**What were your objectives and why was this important to the business? Max 10 points**

**FROM THE HAPPIEST TO THE MOST STRESSFUL TIME**

Welcoming a baby is meant to be one of life’s most joyful experiences. But for the 1 in 10 families whose child is born prematurely (Source: World Health Organization), that joy can quickly turn into anxiety, fear, and medical crisis. The moment that should bring connection and celebration becomes defined by wires, incubators, and uncertainty.

**BUT WHILE MANY FOCUS ON THE BABY, TWO PEOPLE ARE OVERLOOKED**

In NICUs, the full attention is rightly placed on the fragile health of the newborn. But in that same environment, parents often receive little to no emotional support. They are overwhelmed, afraid, and alone. While the baby is monitored and cared for, the parents’ mental and emotional wellbeing is left unaddressed.

## **AND IN THE MIDDLE EAST, THE STIGMA IS WORSE**

In the region, cultural silence around premature birth adds another layer of difficulty for families. Conversations about preemies are often avoided. Many parents face shame, isolation, or feel they have failed in some way. The emotional burden is intensified by the lack of open discussion or visible support systems.

## **PAMPERS, A BRAND KNOWN FOR CARE, DECIDED TO STEP UP WHEN CARE WAS MISSING MOST**

The primary objective was to provide meaningful, direct emotional support to parents of preemies the moment they needed it most. By doing so, Pampers aimed to deepen trust with new parents and move beyond functional product associations into the territory of emotional care and advocacy.

The campaign also had clear business goals. By stepping into this emotional space in a credible and culturally sensitive way, Pampers sought to reinforce its leadership in baby care, drive positive brand sentiment, and generate organic earned media through authentic, values-driven action.

## **What were the insights and data that led you to the strategy? Max 15 points**

### **OUR TASK WAS CLEAR: WE NEEDED TO COMFORT PREEMIE PARENTS**

Premature birth places enormous emotional strain on families.

Some are first-time parents, already unsure of themselves, now faced with a fragile newborn hooked up to machines. Others are parents of older children, forced to split their time and emotional energy between home and hospital.

Regardless, they were all physically exhausted, mentally overwhelmed, and emotionally stretched thin. Sleeping on chairs, navigating medical updates, and managing uncertainty day after day leaves them feeling powerless and isolated.

### **THE INSIGHT > NOTHING COMFORTS A PARENTS LIKE THEIR BABY'S COMFORT AND CALM**

One thing was consistently true across all parents in the NICU: their own sense of calm was entirely dependent on their baby's comfort. If the baby was settled, they could relax, if only for a moment.

But when the baby was crying, restless, or under visible stress, the parents' anxiety intensified. We realised that supporting the baby's wellbeing was also a direct path to supporting the parent's emotional state.

### **AND LULLABIES ARE A STRONG SOURCE OF COMFORT FOR BABIES**

Scientific research confirmed that the sound of a mother's voice, particularly through lullabies, and a mother's heartbeat can help regulate preemie breathing, reduce cortisol levels, and support neurological development. At the same time, lullabies are a familiar cultural tool across the region. They are passed down through generations, used not just to soothe but to connect, reassure, and show love.

### **BRANDS IN THE REGION WERE QUITE ABSENT IN THIS SPACE**

Despite the intensity of the NICU experience, no brand was offering parents meaningful emotional support. There were no resources made for them. No booklets, no tools, nothing that acknowledged their fear, exhaustion, or helplessness.

In a space filled with machines and medical updates, there were no gestures of care. No brand had stepped in to offer reassurance or simply say, "You are not alone."

The silence was loud.

## **AND THIS IS WHERE WE SPOTTED OUR OPPORTUNITY**

To take a source of comfort proven to calm babies and turn it into a tool to comfort parents too. By reimagining traditional lullabies as messages of hope, Pampers could provide emotional grounding the moment it was needed most.

Not with a product, but with something far more powerful: reassurance.

## **What new strategies and creative and innovative approaches did you take? Max 20 points**

### **WE BUILT AN EMOTIONAL INTERVENTION, NOT A CAMPAIGN**

This was not about launching an ad. It was about creating something parents would hold onto during the most difficult days of their lives.

Pampers designed the experience to feel personal, quiet, and deeply human. It was not branded, not transactional, and not treated like marketing.

### **WE REWROTE LULLABIES AS MESSAGES OF HOPE**

Classic nursery songs were reimagined to speak directly to the preemie experience. Instead of lyrics about sleep or play, each lullaby delivered a message of strength, resilience, and calm.

They acknowledged what parents were feeling and gently reminded them they were doing enough.

The lullabies were printed in a beautifully illustrated book using soft, calming colours and textures that reflected the fragility and strength of preemies.

### **WE PAIRED THOSE WORDS WITH SOUND AND SCIENCE**

Alongside the book, Pampers released a playlist of the lullabies sung by a preemie mother, layered with the sound of a mother's heartbeat.

This combination was designed to soothe babies while also offering emotional comfort to the parents.

The use of a real preemie parent gave the recordings authenticity, and the heartbeat added a physical, science-backed layer of calm.

### **WE DISTRIBUTED WHERE IT MATTERED MOST: DIRECTLY INTO HOSPITALS**

Books were delivered straight to neonatal wards across the UAE, reaching parents in the very moment they needed support. This direct model bypassed traditional media entirely. There were no ads, no purchase hooks, and no product tied to the intervention. Just comfort, delivered with care.

### **WE EXTENDED THE EXPERIENCE FAR BEYOND THE HOSPITAL**

The lullaby playlist was released across 30+ global streaming platforms, giving parents ongoing access wherever they were.

Social content invited parents to share their own lullaby moments, building a quiet but powerful community of support.

Nothing was branded overtly. Everything was designed to be genuinely helpful.

### **WE ALSO BROUGHT STAR POWER TO THE CONVERSATION WITHOUT LOSING THE INTIMACY**

To spark wider awareness and normalize the conversation around premature birth, Pampers partnered with Arab pop icon Nawal El Zoghbi, a beloved figure across generations of women, to appear on the fastest-growing podcast in the Middle East, Hekmat Wehbi Podcast.

Joining her was Dr. Rania Ayat, a respected pediatrician, who brought medical credibility and helped guide the conversation with compassion and authority.

The episode struck a powerful balance between personal vulnerability and expert advice, opening the door for millions of mothers to feel seen, supported, and reassured.

### **What were the risks, how were you brave? Max 20 points**

#### **WE SHOWED UP IN A SPACE WHERE BRANDS USUALLY STAY SILENT**

Premature birth is not something brands talk about. It is emotionally complex, medically sensitive, and culturally avoided in many parts of the region.

Pampers chose to enter this space not with a product, but with empathy. That decision came with risk. It meant showing up in a moment of vulnerability without offering a solution, only support.

#### **WE DID NOT INCLUDE PRODUCT OR PROMOTIONAL MESSAGING**

There was no pack-shot. No discount. No call to buy. We deliberately stripped out anything that could be seen as branding or sales driven.

This was a gesture of care, not a campaign. In doing so, we risked the work being overlooked or undervalued by traditional marketing metrics.

#### **WE REDEFINED WHAT DIRECT MARKETING COULD MEAN**

Instead of pushing a message out, we delivered something tangible into parents' hands.

A book they could hold, in the moment they felt most helpless.

An audio experience they could turn to when there was nothing else to do but wait.

It was direct marketing that asked for nothing in return.

#### **WE TRUSTED SILENCE OVER SCALE**

This was not designed to go viral. It was not meant to reach millions overnight.

It was meant to reach the right people at the right moment.

That required patience, restraint, and belief in the value of small, meaningful impact over mass impressions.

#### **WE AMPLIFIED OUR IMPACT THROUGH STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS**

To extend our support beyond emotional comfort, we launched key partnerships during World Prematurity Day, with the goal of raising awareness and providing tangible support to families navigating premature birth.

Pampers partnered with Union Coop, a leading UAE retailer, to create in-store displays and educational materials to raise public awareness of the challenges preemies and their families face. The centrepiece was a striking glass cube installation, engraved with motivational messages and styled like an exhibition, drawing attention to the cause and inviting curiosity and conversation.

The campaign was activated across Union Coop's top five stores in the UAE, ensuring visibility in the locations with the highest footfall and shopper engagement.

Flyers, shelf materials, and point-of-sale displays further reinforced the message, turning retail spaces into awareness hubs.

Influencers were invited to visit the installations and share the experience, sparking organic conversation across social media.

We also partnered with Al Jalila Foundation, a prominent healthcare charity. Every Pampers purchase contributed to the cause, and as part of the initiative, Pampers donated AED 110,000 to the foundation.

The donation was used to support NICU care for premature babies in hospitals, especially for families unable to afford critical treatment, transforming empathy into meaningful action.

These partnerships proved that brand purpose doesn't stop at messaging. It lives where families shop, where they share, and, most importantly, where they struggle.

### **What were the measurable results? Max 20 points**

#### **THE RESPONSE FROM PARENTS AND PROFESSIONALS WAS OVERWHELMINGLY POSITIVE**

The campaign received a 90% positive sentiment score among preemie parents and neonatal professionals. Many described it as the first time they felt emotionally seen during their NICU experience.

#### **IT INCREASED PAMPERS' VISIBILITY IN NEONATAL CARE CONVERSATIONS**

Mentions of Pampers in neonatal care contexts rose by 5.7 times during and after the campaign (Source: Brandwatch). The brand became part of the conversation in spaces it had never entered before, including hospital-led parenting forums and support groups.

#### **THE PLAYLIST REACHED GLOBAL SCALE WHILE THE PODCAST DROVE DEEP REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT**

The lullaby playlist was accessed in more than 180 countries. Parents in the UAE, as well as in diaspora communities abroad, shared the content across social platforms, often tagging Pampers not as a brand, but as a source of comfort.

Additionally, the podcast content reached more than 80% of moms in the region, with engagement rates exceeding 20% on social media (Source: Client Data), proving that when a campaign is grounded in truth, even celebrity-driven content can feel deeply personal and purposeful.

#### **THE CAMPAIGN SPARKED WIDE ENGAGEMENT ACROSS SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY CHANNELS**

Influencers, parents, and healthcare voices shared the story organically, driving meaningful conversation around preemie parenting and emotional support. The work helped surface a topic that is often hidden or avoided, particularly in the region.

#### **AND IT DID ALSO DRIVE MEASURABLE BUSINESS GROWTH**

Beyond emotional resonance, the campaign delivered real commercial impact.

Pampers' market share grew by +6 points vs. year ago, while category offtake rose by +8 points (Source: Client Data).

Most notably, Pampers offtake surged by +18 points (Source: Client Data), signalling that our act of care translated into both brand love and consumer action.

#### **BUT MOST IMPORTANTLY, THE WORK REACHED THE NICUS THAT NEEDED IT**

The lullaby books were delivered to neonatal units across the UAE, where they were distributed directly to parents by hospital staff. Pampers became present in the most trusted of spaces, not through promotion, but through care.

### **How does your work advocate the reputation/importance of the Marketing industry? Max 15 points**

This work demonstrated that marketing could serve a purpose beyond promotion. It showed that brands can provide care, not just communication, and that marketing can play a meaningful role in deeply emotional, often avoided spaces. By entering the world of neonatal care with empathy rather than messaging, Pampers reframed what it means for a brand to be present.

There was no slogan, no sales hook, and no overt branding. The intention was not to interrupt or persuade, but to support. Pampers offered something useful and human in a moment of real need. In doing so, it proved that the most powerful brand actions are often the quietest ones.

It also redefined direct marketing. Instead of pushing out a message, Pampers placed something personal into parents' hands the moment they needed comfort most. It was direct not in format, but in impact. It turned marketing into presence.

Finally, it challenged the industry to think beyond reach and visibility. This work succeeded not because it went wide, but because it went deep. It made the case that marketing can lead with care, stay relevant without being loud, and leave a lasting impression without asking for anything in return.