

**2014
Marketing
Society Awards**

**Brand
Activation**

John Lewis





Executive Summary

John Lewis – The Bear & The Hare

This paper tells the story of the 2013 John Lewis Christmas Campaign. Around a single creative theme – give someone a Christmas they’ll never forget – was created a wealth of brand activation. But this is activation way beyond just a clever use of channels, this is fundamental activation that influenced product range, store merchandising, CSR strategy, social engagement and online marketing.

And it is brand activation that generated quite extraordinary impact socially, culturally and commercially. 12 million people have watched the TV ad on YouTube, it made the front page of Private Eye and put a single at the top of the official chart for three weeks. And it generated record sales and ROI levels.

Christmas is the key trading time for retailers in the UK. Winning at Christmas no longer takes a great TV ad alone. It demands ever more integrated and creative customer engagement. In 2013 John Lewis emphatically ‘won’ Christmas with sales performance that eclipsed all other retailers. Making a significant contribution to this was a little Bear, his friend The Hare, a big idea and a brilliantly and broadly activated brand campaign.

Christmas in the UK has become the marketing equivalent of the Super Bowl, with the big retailers as the main players.

In 2014 John Lewis could be said to have won the Christmas marketing Super Bowl. The campaign was a far bigger social, cultural and commercial success than any other retailer's Christmas efforts. And one of the biggest drivers of that success was the incredible integration at the heart of the campaign, activating their campaigns behind a single theme, across numerous touchpoints.

**1. So who
won the
Super Bowl
in 2013?**





**2.
Christmas
matters..
a lot**

Christmas accounts for around 20% of overall sales and 40% of annual profits at John Lewis. And a successful Christmas sets the business up well for the coming year, giving it great momentum and confidence.

In the past John Lewis has performed well at Christmas. Iconic advertising campaigns – The Long Wait, The Snowman's Journey – have helped deliver market leading commercial performances. But in 2013 the ambition was bigger.

John Lewis is at the forefront of omnichannel retailing, embracing stores, digital mobile and the hybrid of them 'click and collect'. The Christmas campaign activated all these opportunities to interact with different audiences.

The objective was simple - to create the most integrated marketing campaign ever for John Lewis, and in fact for any retailer.

Give someone a Christmas they'll never forget

John Lewis has a broader product assortment than any other general merchandiser. This means that no matter who you are buying for you will be able to find the perfect gift at John Lewis.

That makes John Lewis the home of 'thoughtful gifting' at Christmas time, where shoppers can find the gifts that demonstrate just that little bit more thought than they could elsewhere.

And what is the most thoughtful gift anyone can give... the gift of Christmas itself. In 2013 our creative focus was the joy of experiencing Christmas for the first time, seen through the eyes of someone who had always missed out...

... a hibernating bear.

3. the
theme at
the heart
of the
activation





The Bear & The Hare

Christmas marketing is often about glitz, glamour, celebrities, sparkle and clichés. This is especially true in the retail sector.

John Lewis is determined to stand apart, taking a calmer and quieter approach to its marketing, preferring to touch its customers hearts with more emotive ideas.

And in 2013 that idea was 'The Bear and The Hare', a woodland tale of friendship between two animated characters.

The Bear always missed the fun and joy of Christmas because he hibernated through winter. But this year his friend was determined to find a gift that would help him be part of the festivities, the gift of Christmas itself.

Let's start in store

The Bear and the Hare and the Campaign theme lived on every carrier bag, while the characters themselves came to life in store, with an interactive bear's cave which provided an opportunity for children to hear the narrated version of The Bear & The Hare and play interactive Bear & Hare games.



It also included a Brighton pier-inspired woodland setting where children or adults could have their photo taken with the woodland creatures

...and in windows

Each branch featured a bespoke Bear and Hare window which gave directions to the Bear Cave.



4. not a marketing campaign, a total brand world

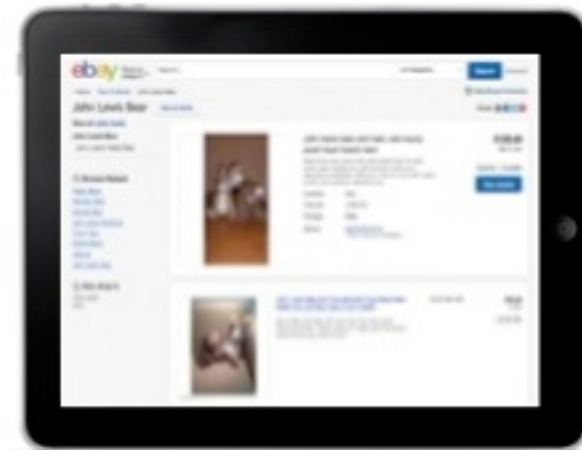


A campaign with its own range of merchandising

A significant range of merchandise was sourced and sold in store and online, themed all around the campaign. This is the first time John Lewis has created such a range to activate a marketing campaign.

The range included alarm clocks, soft toys, hardback story books, pyjamas, and Bear and Hare onesies in all sizes.

The collection had a 97% sell through rate and the majority of merchandise was sold out within 10 days of the campaign launching. Many of the products have become collector's items, selling on eBay for hundreds of pounds.



Online

The Bear and the Hare campaign was activated with gusto online.

A bespoke app was created – the story of the two friends was narrated by Lauren Laverne and games and learning activities build throughout it. Over 300,000 downloads followed and it topped the Apple leisure app chart.

Additionally, an online Christmas card maker was developed that let customers blend themselves with the woodland creatures, to create a unique card for friends and family. Over 12,000 Christmas cards were created.





Bespoke Twitter @handles were created for the campaign's main characters, delivering 168m impressions of #bearandhare and #sleepingbear in opening weekend from 26k tweets.

The Shazam music recognition app was taken over to reach all the people searching for the music from the campaign. It became the most Shazam'd ad of 2013.

And a major competition – Reworked - ran on YouTube inviting people to record their own version of the song on the advert. The winner would have their version played out on TV on the advert on Christmas Day. Matthew Fearon, a 29 year old busker from Liverpool was hand-picked by Keane.

CRM

John Lewis prides itself on rewarding its very Best Customers and the Bear and Hare provided the perfect platform to do this for my John Lewis members.

Customers were invited with their children to attend a magical 'premier' the night before the ad launched on social channels.

Over 250 people attended the event at Kew Gardens where they were the first to see the Bear and Hare ad as well as a private screening of *The Gruffalo's Child*.

The events included activities such as an 'animal treasure hunt', Winter Wonderland, balloon modeling and gingerbread decorating. Children left with a Bear or Hare soft toy.





CSR

Bringing Skills To Life is a free online primary school education programme created by John Lewis.

Download-able Bear and Hare activity cards were made for all three key primary age groups. There was also an online gallery so that schools could upload their pupils' work.

Many classes created their own stories and poems based on the Bare & Hare story. Some even went on to create their own animated versions of the ad.

Over 3000 teachers visiting the section of the Bringing Skills to Life website and over 1000 downloads of the activity cards.



In popular culture

The songs from the John Lewis adverts have charted well in the past, but this year's soundtrack was particularly popular and topped the Official UK singles charts for three weeks.

The campaign was also picked up by many keen spoofers on YouTube, with amusing different outcomes.

And the TV advert become the star of another show – Channel 4s Gogglebox, that screened a whole section on its TV viewers watching it for the first time.

Gogglebox



Official Singles Chart UK Top 100

By [Official Charts](#)

The Official Singles Chart UK Top 100 is compiled on behalf of the

Pos	LW	WKS	Title, Artist, (Label)
1	4	4	SOMewhere only we know LILY ALLEN (PARLOPHONE)
		6	STONED ONE DIRECTION (SYCO)
		3	OF THE NIGHT BASTILLE (VIRGIN)
4	1	2	UNDER CONTROL CALVIN HARRIS

A screenshot of the John Lewis Facebook page. The page features a header image with a fox and a penguin in a snowy landscape. The text 'John Lewis' is visible in the header. Below the header, the page name 'John Lewis' and the number of likes '699,874 Likes' are shown. The main content area contains the text 'Retail and Consumer Merchandise', 'Welcome to the official John Lewis Facebook page', and 'We'll keep you updated on what we're up to and expert Partners are never far away if you have a'. At the bottom, there are links for 'About' and 'Suggest an Edit'. A white circle is overlaid on the page, containing the section header.

5. A radical media strategy

Media was planned to activate this 'new world' strategy around three phases:

1. **Tease:**
harnessing the public's anticipation of the forthcoming ad.
2. **Launch:**
unveiling the ad
3. **Engage:**
adding depth to the story and inviting participation

In short, while the Christmas campaigns of old had positioned TV as the centrepiece of the plan, this year the TV ad would only be the tip of the iceberg.

Stage One - Tease

Working with ITV, we ran 10" teasers with a mysterious hashtag #sleepingbear. The teaser 'ads' also carried a call to action to tune in that Saturday's X Factor where all would be revealed.

The teasers were purposely de-branded and carried the station's logo to give the impression that ITV was launching something big in the show. This created a sense of intrigue – what was this #sleepingbear? 4,000 tweets produced 8 million impressions of the unbranded campaign hashtag, with twitter opinion split between this being something to do with either John Lewis or Coke.

At the same time a special outdoor Installation was unveiled outside ITV's studios on London's Southbank – the world's first ever tree projection!.

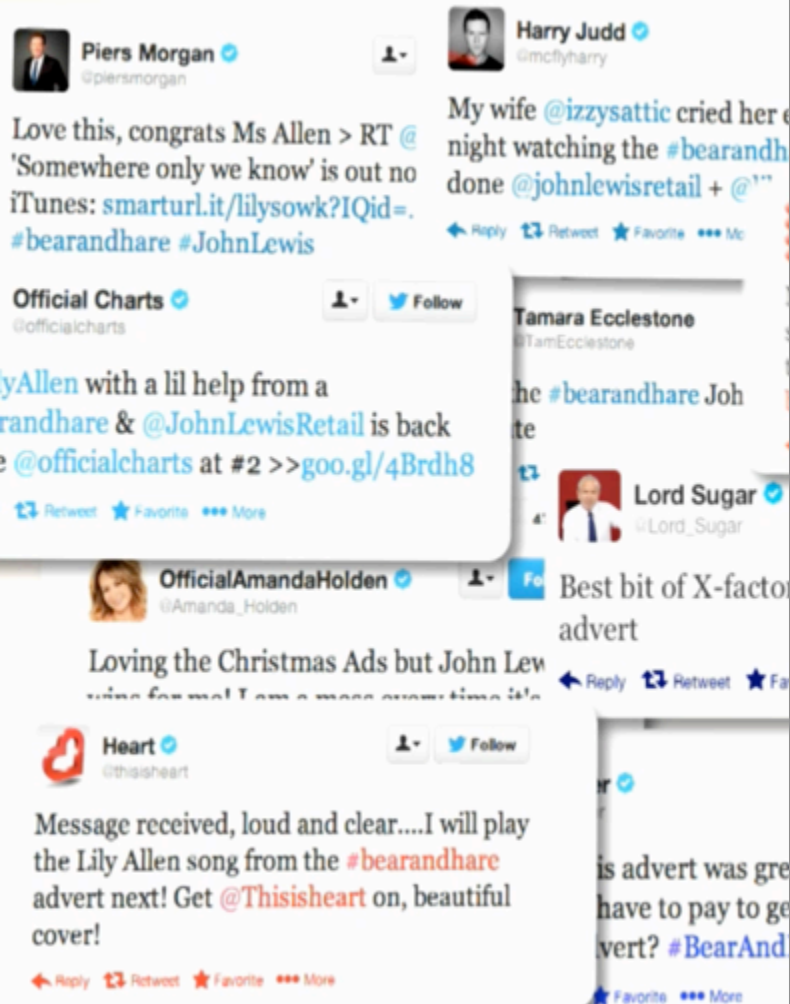
Again unbranded, it encouraged people to tune in to the X Factor launch spot and was busily tweeted about too.



Stage Two - Launch

The ad was launched online first to allow customers and followers of John Lewis the chance see it before it was broadcast nationally on TV. This helped to generate further buzz with 1.5 million people viewing it online before a single spot had aired on TV.

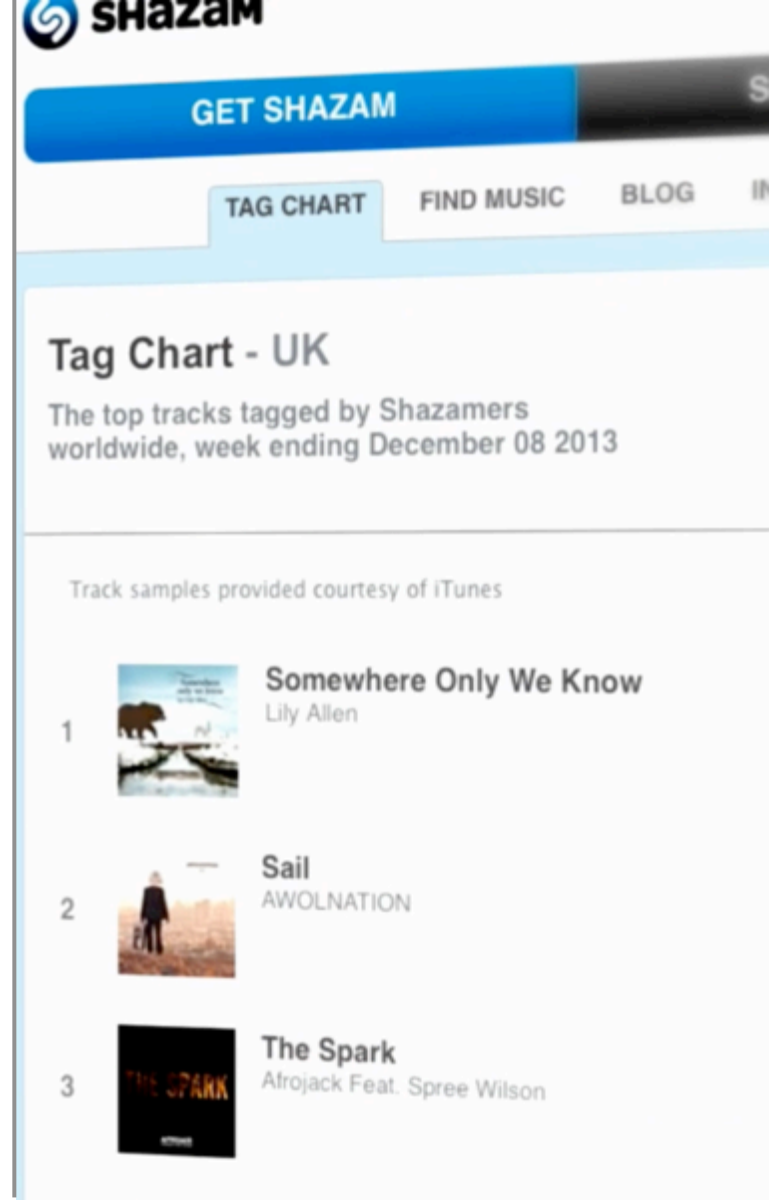
The closest TV advertising equivalent to the Super Bowl in the UK is the X Factor on the second Saturday in November. It is this particular show that is used by dozens of brands to launch their fight for the most loved Christmas TV ad. John Lewis had the first ever takeover of a commercial break in the X Factor. This was an exclusive for John Lewis that required the agreement of Simon Cowell's production company – Syco.



Stage Three - Engage

With the ad launched, the focus switched to extending the story. A lot of this engagement has been discussed already but other highlights include...

- 100% SoV of Lilly's cover version in the Shazam music recognition app, so that when people 'Shazam-d' the ad track they would be prompted to download the e-book as well
- Ads in Apple and Android apps were run to further promote the free e-book
- Cinema goers were treated to the full length 2 min ad (which was only broadcast once on TV in the launch premiere break)
- Skippable ads were rolled out across VOD and gave viewers the option to watch the full length ad rather than pushing it on them and interrupting their viewing behaviour



John Lewis

John Lewis had the most high-profile advertising campaign of Christmas 2013. In fact, it was probably one of the most high-profile ads of all time. The saccharine tale of a hare that buys a bear an alarm clock so that he can enjoy his first Christmas also appeared to have considerable persuasive powers.

The soundtrack by Lily Allen spent three non-consecutive weeks at the top of the singles charts and sales of alarm clocks rose 55 per cent in the week after the ad first aired. More importantly, overall sales increased 6.9 per cent in the five weeks leading to 28 December, while online takings were up 22.6 per cent compared with the same period in 2012.

The year-on-year improvement in sales was not as good as it was in 2012 (13 per cent) and is building on its previous success.

Andy Street, director of John Lewis, was impressed with DDB's campaign and in a statement thanked them for the financial results. "It's great to see many people enjoying the brand's TV ad. The 'hare' has been viewed more than 11.5 million times on YouTube.

In January 2014 Campaign magazine wrote:

'John Lewis had the most high-profile campaign of Christmas 2013. In fact, it was probably one of the most high-profile campaigns of all time.'

And the results reflect the extraordinary commitment to truly integrated brand activation...

6. the Results

The social impact

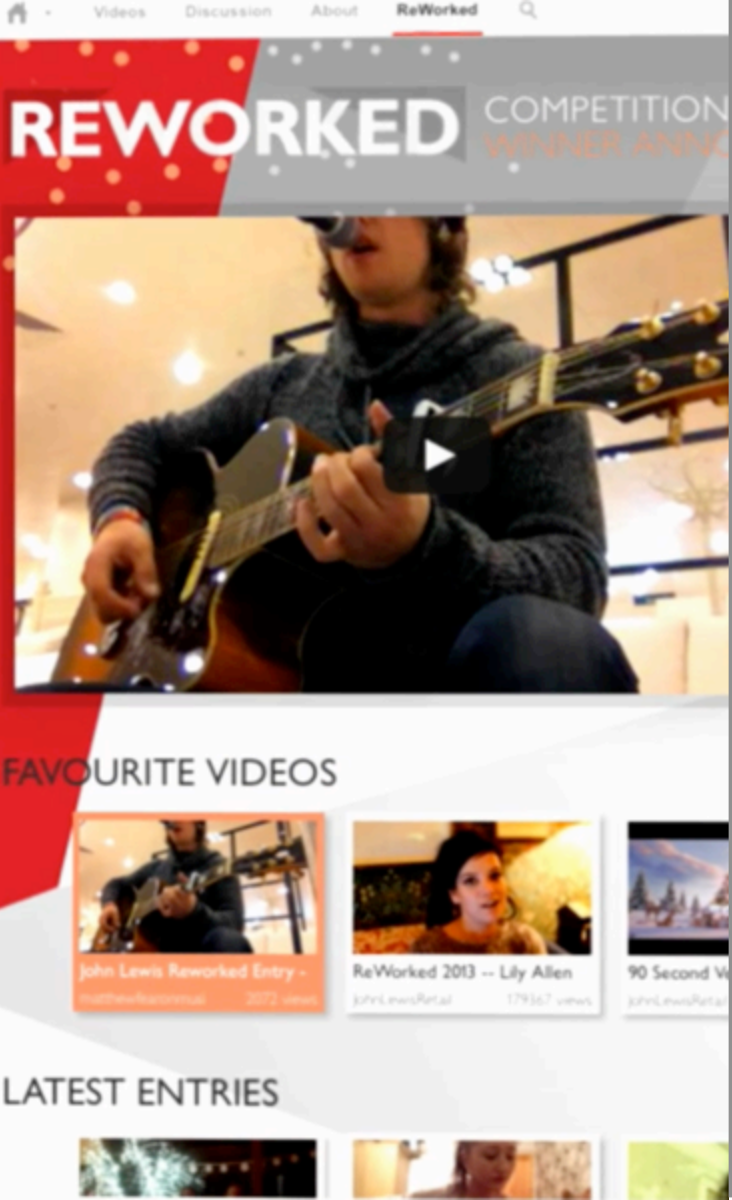
Undoubtedly this was the biggest online response to a marketing campaign in 2013 and possibly one of the most prolific ever.

The ad trended globally on twitter within two hours of airing, and it was the most shared video in the world in November.

Across the Christmas period the TV advert received 12.2 million YouTube views. Compared with the other big Christmas campaigns this is a staggeringly high viewership, and is actually 50% more people than tuned into the BBC's top-rated programme on Christmas day (Doctor Who - which averaged an 8.3 million audience).

	YouTube views
M&S	969,342
Debenhams	403,000
Sainburys	1,179,000
Tesco	786,000
Morrisons	358,125
Debenhams	105,047
Total competitors	3,800,514
John Lewis	12,200,000
John Lewis 'Making Of'	251,899





But it wasn't just YouTube that saw significant activity around the campaign...

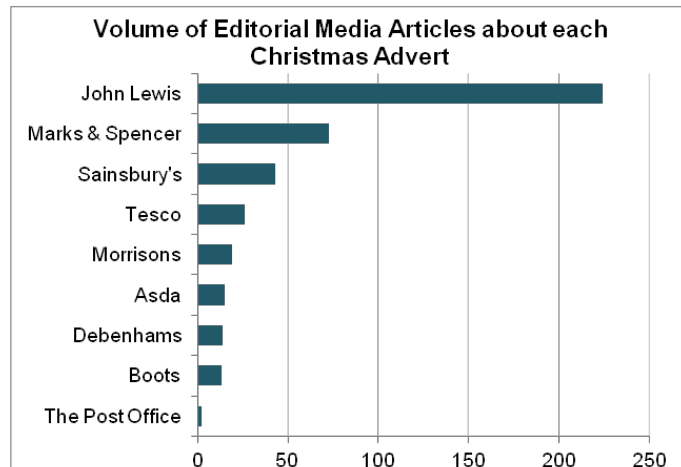
- In the X Factor launch spot there were **21%** more tweets than X Factor when the ad broke on ITV
- **4,000** tweets produced 8 million impressions of the unbranded 'sleepingbear' hashtag
- **500** entries were received for the YouTube soundtrack cover competition
- **12,000** Bear and Hare themed online Christmas Cards were sent by customers to friends and family
- **300,000** Bear and Hare story apps were downloaded onto smartphones and tablets
- **130,000** Shazams of Lilly's cover version

The cultural impact

The cultural impact of the campaign was marked.

The Lily Allen soundtrack went to number one for three weeks on the official UK charts, selling 20,311 units, equating to a donation of £18,076.79 to Save the Children.

Every national newspaper covered the campaign, with over 200 articles in total, far eclipsing the competition:





But even those publications that stand proudly against consumer campaigns could not ignore The Bear & The Hare, with the campaign making the front cover of Private Eye.

It was also the subject of conversation on shows as varied as Graham Norton, Charlie Brooker's 2013 Wipe and Have I Got News For You.

The commercial impact

John Lewis was the clear winner across the key Christmas retail period in 2013.

Sales were up 6.9% in the five weeks to 28th December. This compares very favourably with key competitors and other retailer's Christmas performances...

John Lewis	+ 6.9%
Waitrose	+ 3.1%
Sainsbury's	+ 0.2%
M&S	- 2.1%
Tesco	- 2.4%
Morrisons	- 5.6%

London Evening Standard

BILL BAILEY
QUALMPEDDLER UK TOUR 2013

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London Crime Politics Mayor Transport Education Health Technology UK World Ladder for London

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'Hare and Bear effect': £101m record takings at John Lewis thanks to Christmas advert



Touching tale: in the advert, a bear's friends help him to enjoy his Christmas

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Andy Street: John Lewis managing director says retailer aims to expand internationally

John Lewis has posted record sales figures for Christmas, up 6.9% year on year, as the retailer gears up to celebrate its 150th anniversary in 2014.

The brand revealed like-for-like sales in the five weeks to 28 December reached £734m, up nearly 7% on the same period in 2012, driven by rapid growth in online sales.

As well as outperforming its rivals and other big retailers over the Christmas period John Lewis also far outdid the overall retail average like-for-like performance, as measured by the British Retail Consortium:

John Lewis	6.9%
The BRC average	0.4%

Marketing ROI

John Lewis work with econometricians at Marketshare They estimate that the campaign drove £128.4m in incremental revenue.

This represents a Revenue ROI of **£25.68**, and a Profit ROI of **£8.91** - a 10% uplift compared to the profit ROI for 2012 (£8.10).

This paper has set out to demonstrate how John Lewis have built upon a very successful advertising formula, to create an even more successful brand activation approach.

Many papers will talk about integrated campaigns. This was an integrated campaign too, but it was so much more than that. This was a campaign that created its own merchandising range that sold out in days; that shot a single to the top of the Christmas charts for three weeks; that brought social media and broadcast media together to allow a customer to sing on the ad on Christmas day; and that was such an event that the nation's favourite TV show was interrupted, exclusively for its launch.

This is brand activation at its finest, united by a single creative theme to deliver class leading sales results and touched the nation's hearts.

**7. a very
happy
ending**

