



# We All Make The Games

Marketing Society Awards  
for Excellence 2013

**Category E**  
Marketing Communications

**Client**  
McDonald's

**Agencies**  
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TMS

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All data marked \* is confidential  
and not for publication

# Executive Summary

298 words

McDonald's was the highest profile Olympic sponsor, but many people were not "lovin' it". A firestorm of criticism enveloped sponsors who were felt to be a bad fit with a sporting event, and London 2012 was dubbed "The Obesity Games".

The brief was to drive affinity for the McDonald's brand by making people feel good about its sponsorship of London 2012. (Ultimately, the aim was to increase sales, as affinity is a proven sales driver.)

The campaign found common ground between a sponsor and an event seemingly poles apart by celebrating the values that London 2012 and McDonald's shared: democracy and generosity of spirit. It shifted the focus from athletes to the people, recognising that The Games are a uniquely inclusive event where everyone has a role to play.

The key lay in new consumer behaviour. This was the first Olympics where people weren't just watching: they were actively creating the narrative of The Games through social media.

Research told us that "The People's Restaurant", could credibly support this new behaviour with a participatory campaign. So We All Make The Games celebrated how everyone from Games Makers to McDonald's crew to the great British public were all playing a part to make London 2012 the greatest show on earth. Superior media planning invited, curated and broadcasted content across platforms from The Sun to Piccadilly Circus to prove, not just say, that we all make The Games.

The campaign drove increases across all appropriateness and affinity measures, and changed the conversation, reducing negative and increasing positive buzz.

August 2012 saw McDonald's UK's biggest ever sales, with incremental growth of +1% beyond projections\*.

The campaign delivered a short-term ROI of £6.06\*, which is very healthy and in line with similar McDonald's campaigns. Long-term return is expected to be even higher.



# The Challenge

## *"The Obesity Games"*

Brand affinity is a proven sales driver for McDonald's, and The Games offer a prime opportunity to generate affinity on a global stage. London 2012 was McDonald's' ninth Games as Official Restaurant, and its first as the official presenting partner of The Games Makers. However, it presented what was probably the brand's toughest affinity challenge ever.

Health campaigners, politicians and media criticised sponsors that people felt were a bad fit with athletics. London 2012 was dubbed "The Obesity Games" and the London Assembly urged the International Olympic Committee to ban sponsorship of The Games by companies that produce high calorie food and drink. To make matters worse, McDonald's came under fire for exclusivity arrangements regarding the sale of chips in the Park.

By July 2012, McDonald's was the sponsor with the highest awareness, but fewer than 1 in 5 people thought it was an appropriate sponsor. Similarly, McDonald's dominated online conversation compared to other Games sponsors, but over half of that chat was negative in sentiment.<sup>1</sup>

And YouGov's brand index showed McDonald's net sentiment at -12.5, the lowest for 2 years.<sup>2</sup>

So as the association of McDonald's with The Games becomes a hornet's nest of negativity and criticism, how do you use McDonald's' Olympic sponsorship to make people feel good about the brand?



Spoo campaign



<sup>1</sup> All data in this paragraph from European Post Sponsorship Research, OMD/TNS

<sup>2</sup> YouGov Brand Index June 2012 to September 2012 (Figures based on a 2 week moving average)



## Making sense of the sponsorship



McDonald's Olympic association goes back to 1968, when they airlifted hamburgers to US athletes who were homesick for Big Macs. Since then, McDonald's had often highlighted its role in "Feeding The Games", providing "athletes, coaches and officials with a familiar taste of home." However, the cultural climate of 2012 meant that the campaign couldn't focus on athletes.

McDonald's had great Olympic stories to tell – from training The Games Makers to the Champion Crew. But research told us that no story would drive affinity on its own, and many were better suited to driving trust.

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Our solution was to find shared territory with The Games.

The Olympics have long celebrated values such as excellence.  
But there was a new vision:

*"London 2012 will be Everyone's Games. This is the vision at the very heart of our brand. It's an invitation to take part and be involved."*

LORD COE, 2007

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McDonald's positioning is "The People's Restaurant", a place that is democratic and populist. From Olympic athletes to the man on the street, "There's a McDonald's for everyone".

So to make people feel good about the sponsorship, we decided to highlight the things that people love about McDonald's – inclusivity, democracy, generosity of spirit – and show how these values were shared with London 2012.



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## The idea

*Recognise that The Games are about more than sport*



To demonstrate these shared values, our idea shifted the focus: from the athletes, to the people.

This recognised an essential truth. That The Games are not just a demonstration of sporting excellence, but also a kind of carnival, a celebration of human endeavour that appeals to not just “the fans”, but people who do not ordinarily follow sports events.

We knew that the people would come together to cheer on the world’s athletes; the people would create an atmosphere of connection and euphoria on the streets; and the people would be warm hosts - welcoming the world and proudly showing them the best of their country and what it can achieve.<sup>3</sup>

The records would be broken in the stadiums, but the people would make The Games.

This was expressed in the line:

*“We All Make The Games”*

- **It was a rallying cry** celebrating how the public, Games Makers and McDonald’s crew made London 2012 the greatest show on earth.
- **It was a unifying story** that wrapped a range of McDonald’s Olympic contributions into a coherent theme.
- **It was refreshingly different.** Many brands fell back on tired sporting analogies, giving us an opportunity to stand out.

<sup>3</sup> Nothing demonstrates the power of this collective effort more clearly than the fact that the host nation usually performs disproportionately well in the medal tables, averaging a haul three times that of a typical Olympic Games. “Modelling home advantage in the Summer Olympic Games”, Journal of Sports Sciences, February 2011

## Show and tell

*Using participation to prove  
that We All Make The Games*

We saw a unique opportunity to not just say, but really *show* how “we all make The Games.”

It was clear that this would be the first “People’s Games” in a very real sense, because they would be the first Olympics where social media had come of age.

For the first time people would be capturing and sharing The Games, as they happened. Not just watching it on TV or in a stadium, but *actively participating in creating the narrative of The Games*.



McDonald’s, as “The People’s Restaurant” could support this behaviour. We were confident that the brand could play this role, because despite the criticism, consumer tracking showed a solid and increasing baseline of trust in and affinity for the brand.<sup>4</sup>

Meanwhile, The Games were riding a wave of positivity: in 2007, just 7.5% of people thought that The Games would have a positive effect on people.<sup>5</sup> By 2011,

27.9% thought so<sup>6</sup>. And while there was plenty of pre-Games carping about logistics, that’s simply the British way – we’re Olympic-standard pessimists! We believed that once you added the “home advantage” and an unprecedented celebratory context (the Royal Wedding and the Golden Jubilee had brought the nation together, most notably in street parties, the like of which hadn’t been seen since 1977) Britain was primed for a summer of saying “I was part of it”.

So we decided to celebrate the collective story of The Games: a story that we invited, curated and broadcasted. We did so in a way that was alive and responsive, to capture the mood of each moment as the Olympic story unfolded.

And in doing so we *demonstrated* that we all make The Games.

<sup>4</sup> Partner Research Briefing 2010

<sup>5</sup> TGI data 2007

<sup>6</sup> TGI data 2011

# A virtuous circle

## *Bringing 'We All Make The Games' to life*

The campaign wove a universe of touchpoints together under the banner of We All Make The Games, in three phases.



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The campaign launched two weeks before the opening ceremony to capitalise on the anticipation. The TVC and a huge 48 sheet outdoor campaign introduced the idea of “Olympic fan types”: Games Makers, Champion Crew and fans experiencing the rollercoaster emotional ride of The Games in all kinds of ways.





The TVC invited people to Facebook, asking "What kind of fan are you?"



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2

Invite

The call to get involved was echoed across multiple media, with placements next to relevant Games content.

Find a Job | M&S Wine | Our Papers | Feedback

Wednesday, Jul 18 2012 6PM 15°C 9PM 15°C 5-Day Forecast

# MailOnline Olympics

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## EXCLUSIVE: Brownlee brothers are geared for triathlon gold in London

By LAURA WILLIAMSON

PUBLISHED: 23:32, 16 July 2012 | UPDATED: 23:32, 16 July 2012

Comments (2) | Share | Tweet | Like

When UK Sport announced their medal targets for the London 2012 Olympic Games, triathlon was in the 'one to two' bracket.

You can make that one or two golds for a start, plus another medal in the men's event. This is a sport that isn't interested in aiming low. Great Britain boast the two current triathlon world champions: Alistair Brownlee and Helen Jenkins.

Brownlee's younger brother Jonny also came second in the 1500m swim, 40km cycle and 10km run in Beijing last October. The British Triathlon Federation have picked their team accordingly.

Turn photos into postcards and send anywhere for £1.49

Send your postcard

WHAT KIND OF FAN ARE YOU?

SHARE YOUR PHOTOS AND YOU COULD STAR IN ONE OF OUR ADS.

Get involved

OLYMPIC SPORTS TEAM GB VISA

Sponsored See All

### Show your Olympic spirit!

We all make the Games - so share your photos and you could become famous!

McDonald's

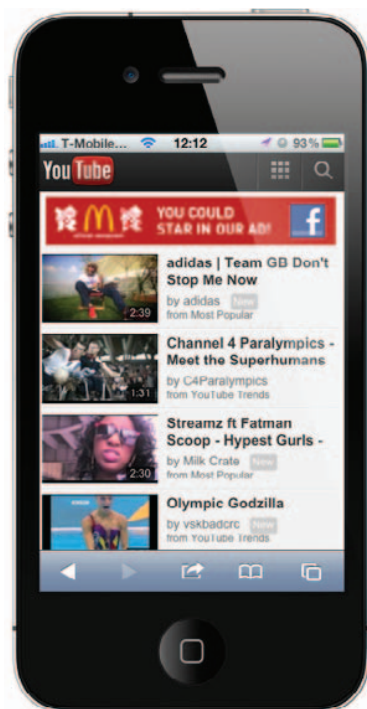
RELATED POST

McDonald's UK

Show your Olympic spirit and you could star in our ads in Piccadilly Circus or The Sun!

Like

Write a comment...



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SUN LET'S MAKE IT GREAT BRITAIN

## Table tennis is like mixed martial arts

IF YOU GO MENTAL YOU JUST GET PICKED OFF

DRINKHALL

CHOP - a downward stroke producing backspin

www.weallmakethegames.co.uk

official restaurant

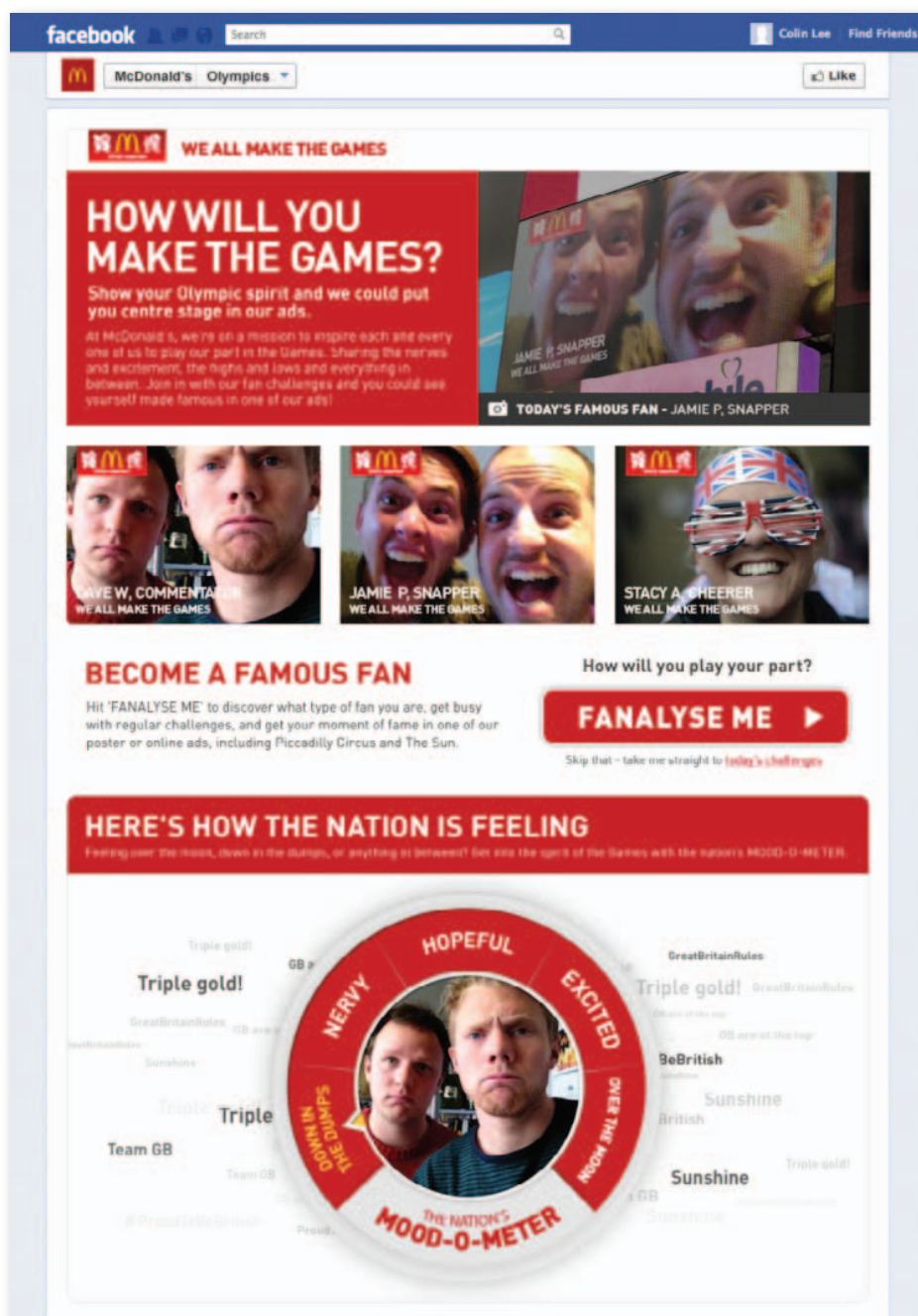


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2

Invite



On Facebook, people used the Fanalyser app to share pictures of their Olympic experiences.

20,000 people from 39 different countries did so – a 60% conversion rate.

But you didn't have to submit content to get involved: our film crews were capturing Games moments as they happened at venues and fan parks...



This film content fuelled 4 new TVCs over the Olympics and Paralympics, made up of live moments of real people experiencing The Games.

For example, as Bradley Wiggins won his gold medal, we introduced “The Fake Hair on Cheekers”



And soon after Usain Bolt won the 100m, we showcased “The 9.63ers.”



And as the Paralympics began we heroed “The Inspired To Try-ers”



Responsive TV was only the start. The pictures submitted through Facebook, and the footage from the film crews, became digital outdoor.



Outdoor delivered both impact and frequency. It was the largest ever live poster campaign to date, involving 250 unique digital posters and over 300 pieces of digital display across 1820 sites. Importantly, we used a large media spend innovatively, to service the people's narrative, not simply to broadcast brand messaging.

Unmissable dominations of London transport hubs ensured almost everyone arriving for The Games would see us celebrating their fellow fans. Special builds all included digital screens, with 3G wifi technology to enable live updates.







Meanwhile, the rest of the country saw thousands of 48 sheets, using premium backlit formats to maximise impact. The ads included the name and home town of their star, ensuring that they didn't seem London-centric.

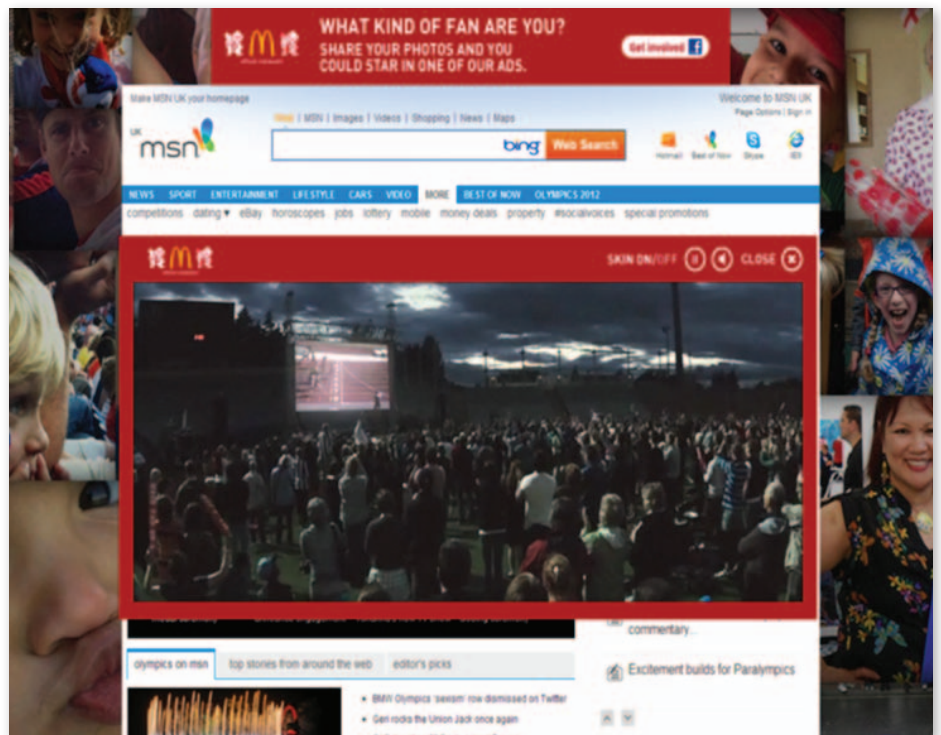
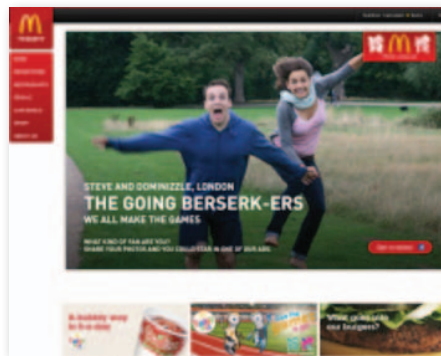
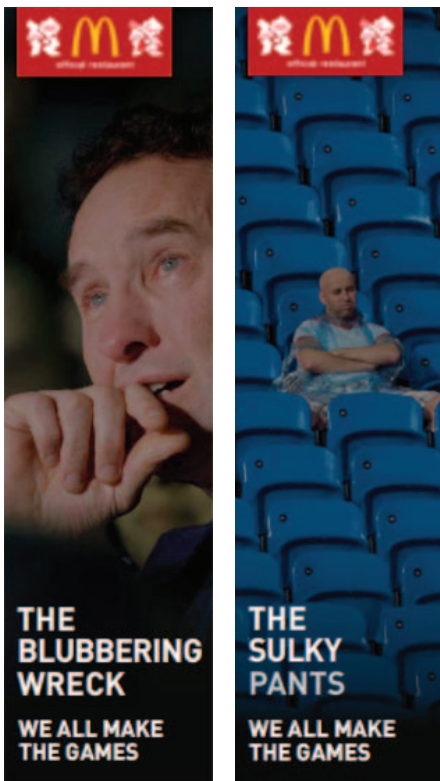


And back in London, the iconic McDonald's Piccadilly sign displayed the fans' submissions.

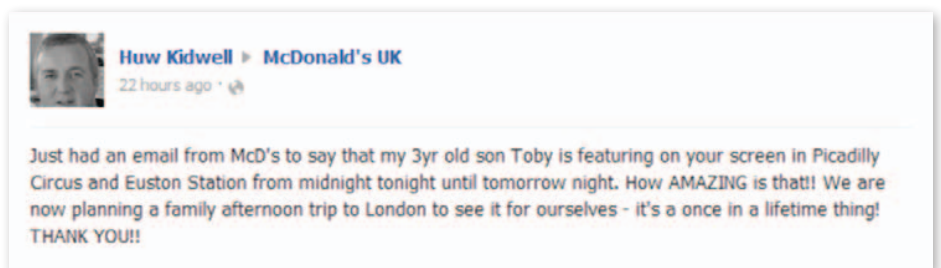
# 3

Amplify

The amplification linked back to small screens, with the people starring on all McDonald's touchpoints, digital display, and a MSN homepage takeover seen by 4.7m unique users.



And to make sure they didn't miss a thing, fans were told via Facebook when and where they would be appearing on the digital outdoor, with video clips showing their moment of fame.



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3

Amplify

Our partnership with News International took *We All Make The Games* into people's hands. What better titles than national institutions The Times and The Sun to celebrate Olympic fans' contributions to The Games?

Across the entire 17 days, The Sun ran a co-branded double page spread showcasing the best pictures of how the public were "making The Games", rewarding them with a moment of fame, and inviting others to get involved.

Meanwhile, The Times reached opinion formers, telling The Games Maker story. Both papers placed campaign content alongside Games news, bringing the media and people's narratives together.

The screenshot shows a McDonald's website page with the headline "We all make The Games". It features a collage of photos of people, some of whom are wearing McDonald's uniforms. The page includes a section titled "WHAT KIND OF FAN ARE YOU?" with a quiz. Below the quiz, there are more photos and text, including a quote from a "GORDON SMITH" who says "I AM UP & AWAY". The page also mentions "INBETWEENERS HIT U.S." and "McDonald's".

The screenshot shows a McDonald's website page with the headline "How to survive swarm weather". It features a large image of a mosquito. The page includes a section titled "AVOID BEING BITTEN AS MOZZIES PLAGUE THE UK". Below this, there is a section titled "THE BEZZIE-MATE PICTURE POSERS" with a photo of a group of people. The page also mentions "McDonald's".

The screenshot shows a McDonald's website page with the headline "Dream machine". It features a large image of a basketball player in a USA jersey. The page includes a section titled "USA basketball squad have plenty to prove against Spain today, writes Nick Szczepanik". Below this, there is a section titled "Dream machine" with a photo of a basketball player. The page also mentions "McDonald's".

The screenshot shows a McDonald's website page with the headline "WE ALL MAKE THE GAMES". It features a large image of a man in a McDonald's uniform. The page includes a section titled "One great event, so many great people". Below this, there is a section titled "WHO ARE THE GAMES MAKERS?" with a photo of a group of people. The page also mentions "McDonald's".

The Sun

THE TIMES

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With the AMPLIFY phase firing across social, broadcast and media platforms, the restaurants told a more detailed story. Using photos of real Games Makers, Champion Crew, Farmers and customers we created a photographic mosaic that formed the silhouette of an Olympic crowd.



A full window takeover was applied to 32 flagship restaurants, while window friezes, mobiles and trayliners highlighted the stories of our Games Makers, Farmers and Champion Crew.



Taking the message to the Olympic venues, press ads in the official programmes celebrated The Games Makers.

## The Grand Finale

The campaign culminated in a TVC made entirely of footage captured during The Games, broadcast in the break after the Paralympics closing ceremony - celebrating that “We All Made The Games”.

It echoed the “inspire a generation” ambition with new fan types such as “The Future Gold-Getters”.

Finally, we created a legacy piece: a Games Makers special, part of The Times souvenir edition. Copies were provided to all 70,000 Games Makers.



The virtuous circle had something for everyone, with 2 layers fuelling each other: passive broadcast, and active participatory. If you did nothing but watch an ad, you could enjoy a celebratory moment that was authentic and responsive. But if you got involved, you could see your contribution become part of the story, played back to you and everybody else, anywhere from Piccadilly Circus to The Sun.

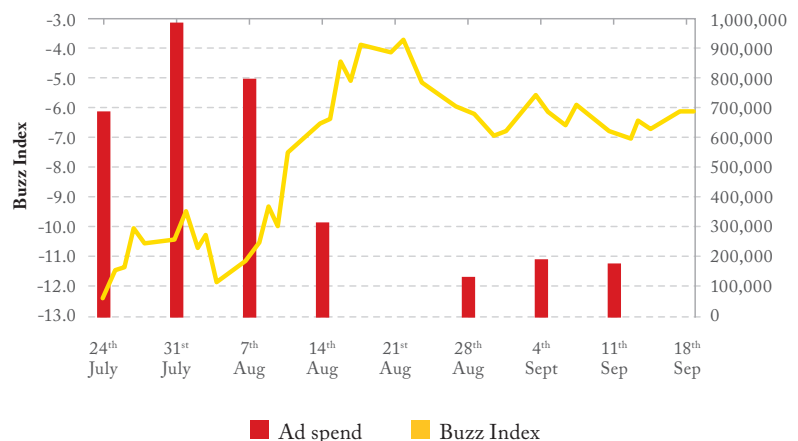
# The Results



## Reduction in negative conversation about the brand

There was a clear reduction in negative buzz immediately after the main burst of media, reflecting its powerful cut-through in a very crowded context: the campaign achieved 77% standout compared to other Olympic advertising.<sup>7</sup>

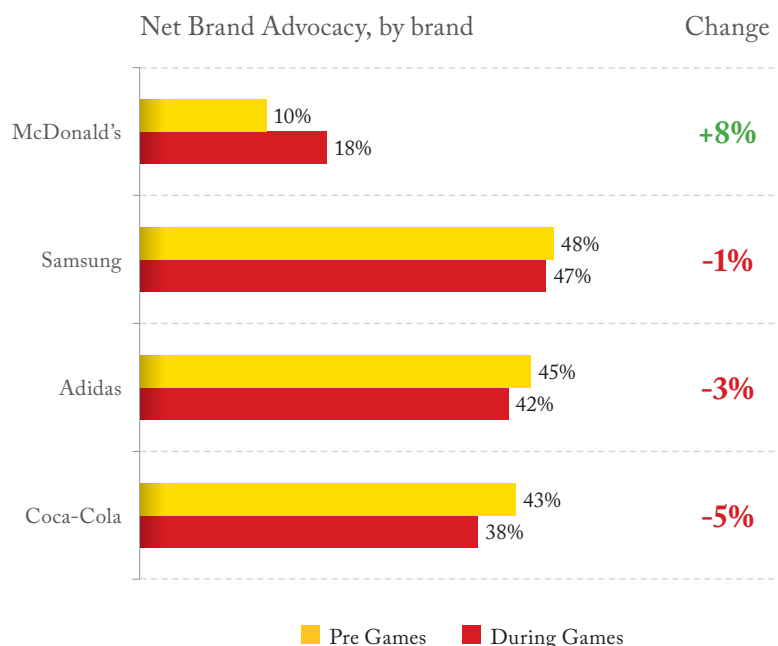
## Reducing negative online conversation



Source: YouGov Brand Index June 2012 to September 2012 (Figures based on a 2 week moving average)

McDonald's saw a significant increase in positive word of mouth offline especially compared to other sponsors.

## Increasing positive offline conversation



Net Advocacy: (Positive word of mouth) minus (Negative/Neutral word of mouth)  
 Pre Games: Aug '11 to June '12  
 During Games: Jul '12 to Sept '12  
 Source: Keller Fay Group's TalkTrack® Britain

<sup>7</sup> HPI campaign tracking



# The Results

2

## Appropriateness and affinity<sup>8</sup>

People who were aware of the campaign were considerably more likely to believe that McDonald's is an appropriate sponsor, and the campaign went beyond this to make them actually feel good about it.

### Appropriate sponsor



### In touch with the nation



### Increased trust and affinity



■ Campaign recognisers  
■ Non recognisers

Average scores across TV, press, outdoor and digital

<sup>8</sup> Sources: JCDcaux outdoor campaign evaluation research, "We All Make The Games"  
News Internationals press campaign evaluation research, "We All Make The Games"  
OMD Insights digital campaign evaluation research, "We All Make The Games"  
HPI post campaign tracking analysis, "We All Make The Games"

# 3

## Commercial success

August saw McDonald's UK's biggest ever sales. August sales showed an incremental growth of +1% beyond projections, while restaurants close to Olympic venues (where Outdoor media was concentrated) saw a 12% uplift, and 67 restaurants (mainly in London) set a new monthly sales record in either July or August\*.<sup>9</sup>

We All Make The Games also achieved significant sales impact despite the unusually tough context. Commercial viewing was down 22%<sup>10</sup> due to the BBC Olympics coverage, and communications awareness dropped for most brands tracked at this time, while retail sales in August were down by 0.4% on a like-for-like basis vs August 2011.<sup>11</sup>

# 4

## ROI

The campaign has already delivered a short-term ROI of £6.06.<sup>12</sup>

Although our econometric modelling showed a short-term ROI, we believe that because this is an emotional, affinity-building campaign, rather than a short-term sales driver, it will continue to deliver a return on investment over the longer-term.<sup>13</sup> Long-term econometric models run by media analysis agencies consistently show ROIs that are at least 2.5 times higher than the short-term ROI, so we believe this campaign could deliver a long-term ROI of at least £15.

The ROI modelling is specifically designed to isolate the impact of advertising, so that £6.06 figure should be the return on investment that advertising by itself delivered.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>9</sup> McDonald's sales data

<sup>10</sup> HPI campaign tracking analysis

<sup>11</sup> British Retail Consortium

<sup>12</sup> Mindshare

<sup>13</sup> The latest IPA effectiveness analysis (The Long and the Short of It, Binet & Field 2012) shows that emotional advertising is more efficient than rational, and delivers more profit

<sup>14</sup> Data is modelled at a store level, so takes into account not only macro factors like the economy, school holidays and weather, but also store-specific factors like footfall, local unemployment, opening hours and nearby competitors. These are all stripped out of the sales model, and any increase in sales is then attributed to marketing initiatives.

# How We All Made The Games



**AMPLIFY**

**CELEBRATE**



**INVITE**



So in the face of intense opposition, We All Make The Games made people feel good about McDonald's and its Olympic sponsorship. We did that by recognising what McDonald's and London 2012 had in common – inclusivity, democracy and generosity of spirit – and bringing those shared qualities to vivid life across many touchpoints, thanks to the social media possibilities of the first real “People’s Games”. We stood out from the crowd by creating something that was genuine, that reflected the mood out there, that was for, and by, the people.

The records were indeed broken in the stadiums, as with the country behind them Britain's Olympians and Paralympians roared to a record 165 medals. But from the spectator-greeters to the lining-the-streeters, from the gone-out-with-a-bangers to the tidying-uppers, at London 2012, we all made The Games.

