



Nothing Cracks Like Magnum: Turning Sound into the Loudest Proof of Quality

2025 Effie Awards Europe | Multi-Market: Media Strategy & Idea | 2025

Brand/Client(s): **Magnum Ice Cream Company**

Lead Agency(s): **LOLA MullenLowe**

Contributing Company(s): **Mindshare Worldwide**

Note: This case study has been edited by the entrant to remove confidential information

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Why is this entry an outstanding example of effective marketing in this Effie entry category, driving measurable impact on health outcomes?

As cocoa prices skyrocketed, competitors downgraded their chocolate quality. But Magnum refused to compromise on quality. To reinforce our leadership, Magnum had to remind consumers why its chocolate is superior. Based on no ice cream brand can crack like Magnum, we created a campaign dramatizing the reactions to the loud crack of Magnum's chocolate. Through OOH and Radio, we used proximity technology to play our Crack sound every time someone passed our ads by foot or car. Penetration increased +290bps, value sales increased +28% in the UK and +21% in the Netherlands, delivering the best March market share in years.

THE CHALLENGE & OBJECTIVES

As cocoa prices increase and competition downgrade their chocolate, Magnum had to remind consumers why it's worth paying more for

THE INSIGHT

Nothing cracks like Magnum: the signature crack sound is Magnum's ultimate proof of its chocolate thickness, quality and superiority.

THE STRATEGIC IDEA/BUILD

An exaggerated but witty campaign that shows how loud and unmissable Magnum's cracking chocolate is.

BRINGING THE IDEA TO LIFE

Through films, OOH and radio audio-synchronized assets, our campaign played Magnum's signature chocolate cracking sound whenever consumers passed by them.

THE RESULTS

Magnum's crack was heard: the highest Market Share in 3 years, Value Sales increased by +28.3% and Penetration by +290bps.

THE CHALLENGE

STATE OF THE MARKETPLACE & BRAND'S BUSINESS

1A. Before your effort began, what was the state of the brand's business and the overall category in which it competes? What was the strategic challenge for your business? Provide context on the degree of difficulty of this challenge.

SINCE 1989, MAGNUM HAS STAYED TRUE TO ITS ORIGINAL RECIPE, NEVER COMPROMISING ON SUPERIOR INDULGENCE.

Every Magnum, from the Classic Stick to new formats such as the Bonbon, is dipped in a generous layer of high-quality chocolate, made only with the finest cocoa beans and carefully crafted to deliver our signature thick cracking chocolate coat.



Magnum's cracking chocolate rapidly became one of the brand's strongest differentiators and a common thread in everything Magnum does, separating the brand from its cheaper imitations.

BUT TO DELIVER THIS SUPERIOR CHOCOLATE EXPERIENCE EVERY SINGLE TIME, IT COSTS A LOT.

Being a premium ice cream is already challenging during a cost-of-living crisis, with private labels continuously growing by offering knock-off 'Magnum lookalikes' options. But recently, that challenge has grown even bigger.

Extreme weather in West Africa has disrupted cocoa plantations, pushing cocoa prices to record highs. In the past 5 years, Cocoa prices have skyrocketed by 440%¹ — and +143% in 2024 alone².

To keep up, Magnum had to increase its price per volume in almost +8% in 2 years in the UK and in the Netherlands³, but sales alone couldn't compensate the price adjustment. In Q1 2024, a year before this campaign, Magnum lost -240bps in Penetration YoY in the UK.³



WHEN YOUR MAIN INGREDIENT GETS 140% MORE EXPENSIVE, WHAT DO YOU DO?

To attack this hard challenge, we could have done what many private labels did to stay competitive: reduce the chocolate content or switch it for a compound – a mixture that mimics real chocolate. But that’s not Magnum.

We’re all about the most indulgent kind of pleasure without compromise. So, we stuck with our original recipe, the same generous thick cracking chocolate with velvety vanilla ice cream, but we decided to finally give our chocolate the protagonism it deserves and make some noise about it.

Business Objectives

Objective - Overview & KPI

TO INCREASE MAGNUM SALES BY +11%.

Rationale - Why the objective was selected and what is the benchmark?

In Q1’2024, a year before this campaign, Magnum value sales increased 11% YoY in the Netherlands. But in the UK, the brand declined -2% YoY. 4 Based on the current aggressive scenario, our goal was to repeat the growth seen in the Netherlands across both countries, delivering an +11% YoY value sales uplift. That way we could keep the growth momentum while reversing the UK’s losses.



Measurement - How did you plan to measure it?

Magnum uses NielsenIQ to track sales. With the platform being able to filter sales per week and quarter, it’s possible to isolate the campaign’s real impact on sales.

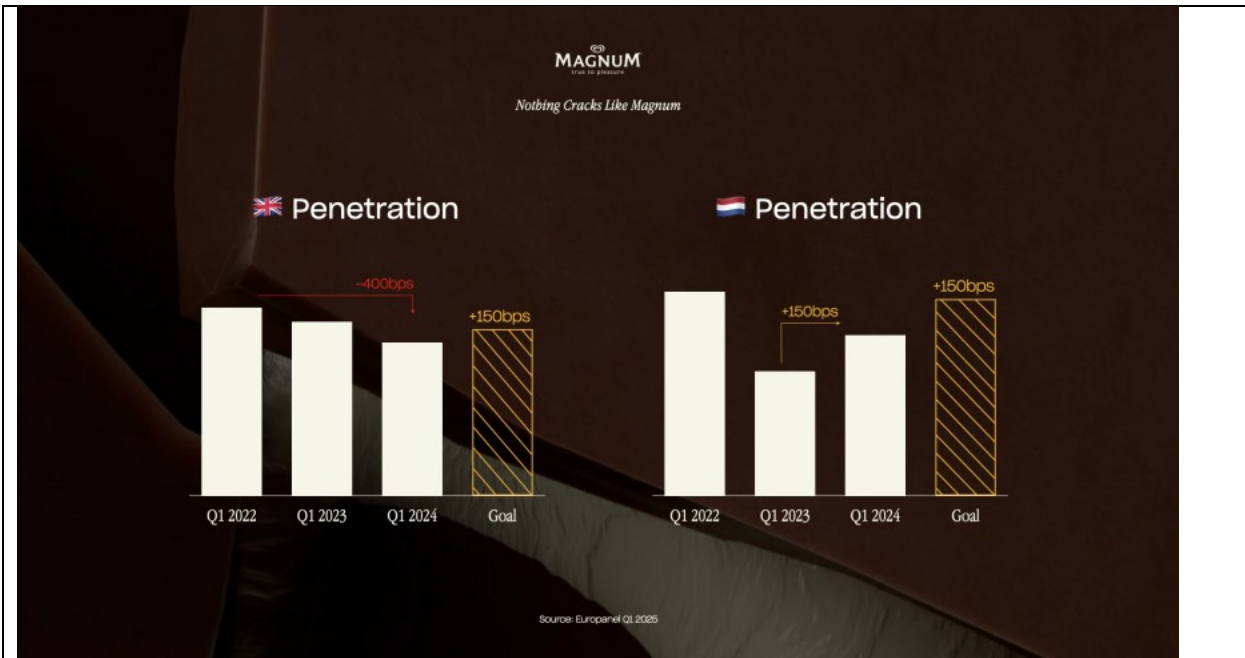
Marketing Objectives

Objective - Overview & KPI

TO INCREASE MAGNUM PENETRATION BY +150bps.

Rationale – Why the objective was selected & what is the benchmark?

Since 2022, Magnum has been losing penetration in most of its main markets. In the UK, Magnum has already lost -400bps in the past two years. In the Netherlands, after losing -330bps, the brand started recovering last year when it grew back +150bps. 4 For this campaign, we aimed to match the Netherlands’ previous growth and deliver an +150bps uplift in both markets, continuing the growth in the Netherlands and recovering penetration in the UK.



Measurement - How did you plan to measure it?

Magnum tracks penetration through Euromonitor data.

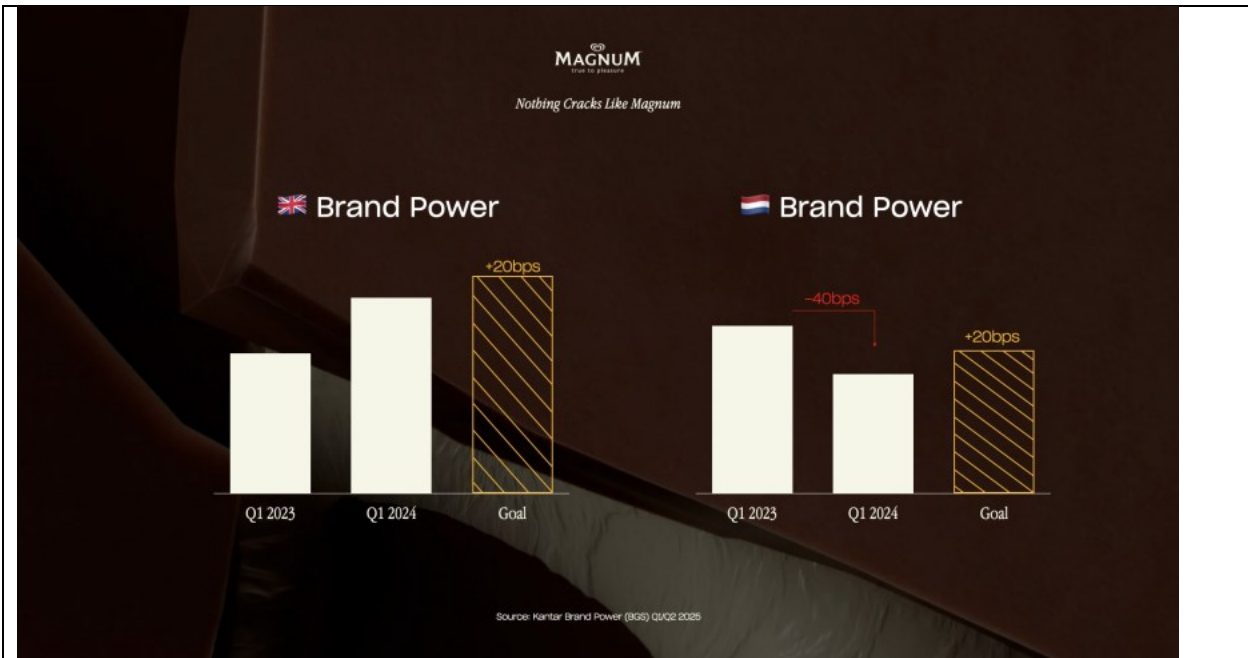
Campaign/Activity Objectives

Objective - Overview & KPI

TO INCREASE BRAND POWER BY +20bps.

Rationale – Why the objective was selected & what is the benchmark?

Brand Power is a hybrid measure of 3 factors developed by Kantar (Meaning, Differentiation and Relevance) and a key determinant of brand success. In Q1'2024, a year before the campaign, Magnum lost -40bps Brand Power in the Netherlands. A huge loss, and a loud warning for the brand. For this campaign, our goal was to put Magnum back on a growth track and deliver a +20bps uplift, recovering at least half of the performance lost. ⁵



Measurement - How did you plan to measure it?

Kantar Brand Tracking report, the study that measure Brand Power.

Sources

1. Text Here (Data Sources: Section 1)

INSIGHTS & STRATEGY

AUDIENCE

Define the target audience(s) you were trying to reach and explain why it was/they were relevant to the brand and the challenge.

FOR MORE THAN 10 YEARS, MAGNUM HAS BEEN STANDING UP FOR REAL PLEASURE. Magnum is a brand that believes a day without pleasure is a day lost, that's why we are constantly pushing to create the most indulgent and pleasurable ice cream experiences. Just like the unique pleasure of eating a Magnum, we want to inspire people to do the same and seek for true pleasure in life.

We call them the Pleasure Seekers.

They are people determined to go all out and seek the best kind of pleasure. They sometimes worry about what other people think, but when the time and circumstances are right, they can completely let go and indulge fearlessly in a rich, complete, and powerful moment of pleasure. From a demographic perspective, they are men and women between 25 – 54 years old.

However, due to the economic crisis and the cocoa inflation, they are switching to cheaper alternatives, mostly Private Labels. These competitors usually use low quality ingredients, like chocolate compound as a cheaper alternative to the real ingredient.

BUT IT'S EXACTLY THIS THAT SEPARATES MAGNUM FROM PRIVATE LABELS. Magnum is uncompromising on quality, and we needed to remind consumers that not all ice creams are made the same, not all chocolate is the same, not all pleasures are the same. To crack this challenging scenario and protect Magnum's leadership, we had to remind Pleasure Seekers that Magnum only uses real thick chocolate and that's why it's worth paying more for.

THE INSIGHT

Explain the thinking that led you to your insight(s). Clearly state your insight(s) here.

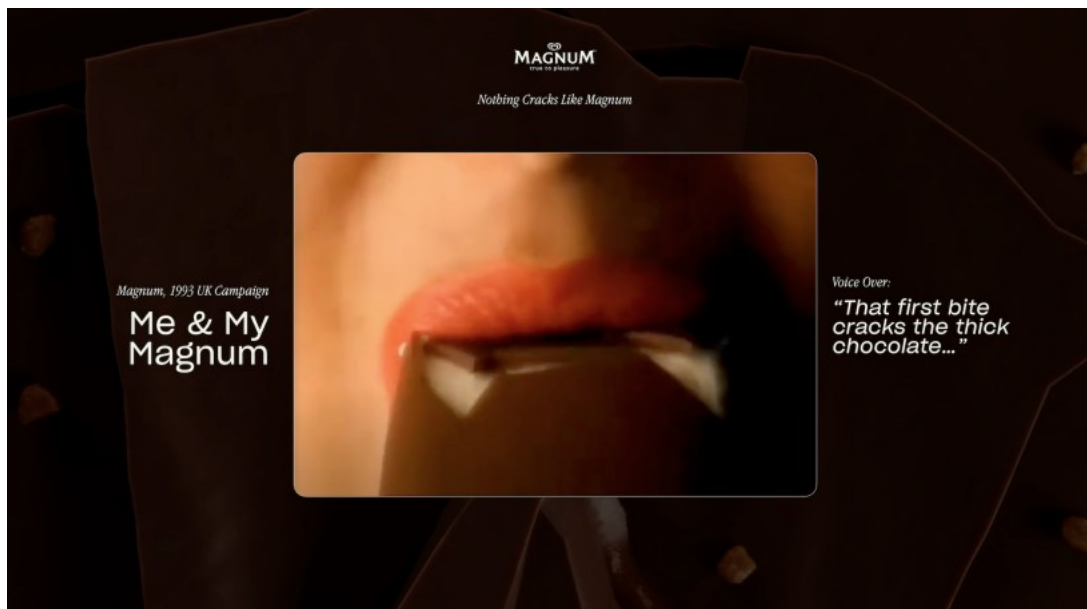
OUR CHALLENGE WAS: HOW COULD WE MAKE CONSUMERS CARE FOR OUR CHOCOLATE?

Magnum's signature cracking chocolate is crafted through premium ingredients and a proprietary recipe. But consumers don't know that. The crack is what they crave, not the details behind it.

In a category driven by indulgence, ingredient-led stories get lost in the noise. For this campaign to work, we couldn't just talk about our chocolate superiority, we needed consumers to feel it. Or better yet, hear it.

AND THE ANSWER WAS LOUD AND CLEAR.

Since the 90's, Magnum has used the cracking sound in communication. Rapidly, it became one of Magnum's strongest distinctive brand assets (DBAs), like Nike's swoosh or Coca-Cola's "tshhh".



But for Magnum, the crack is a lot more than this.

IT'S THE ULTIMATE PROOF OF OUR QUALITY AND WORTH PAYING MORE FOR.

All Magnum ice creams crack so distinctively loud because they are dipped in a thick, generous layer of high-quality chocolate. This coating is the result of decades of research and craftsmanship to ensure a superior cracking experience, no matter the format.

AND CONSUMERS ALREADY KNEW IT.

A five-year robust social listening study ¹, combined with a qualitative research with

brand lovers ² , revealed a consistent truth: what makes Magnum, Magnum, is the first bite when you hear and feel the crack.





Through this strategic idea, we could reinforce our quality chocolate in a way that felt familiar and exciting. Now, we just needed to find the best way to bring this idea to life.

THE STRATEGIC IDEA/BUILD

What was the core idea or strategic build you arrived at using your insight(s) that enabled you to pivot from challenge to solution for your brand and customer?

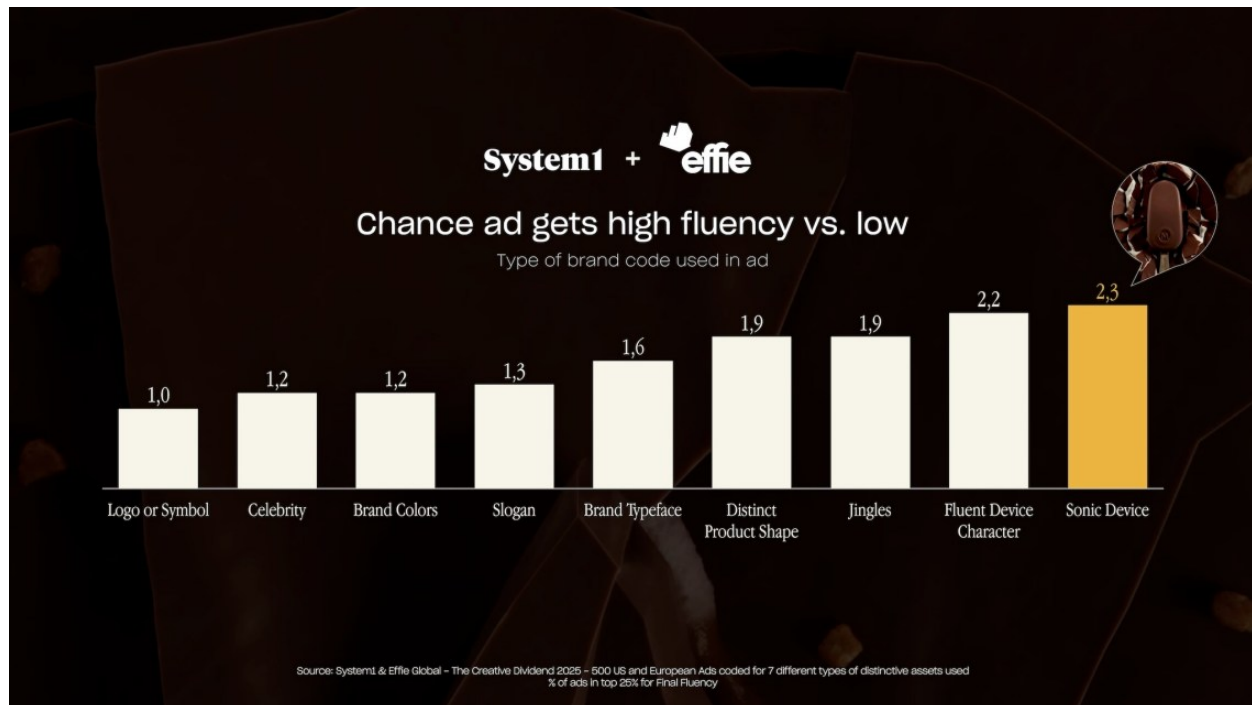
THE CORE IDEA WAS TO TRANSFORM MAGNUM'S "CRACK" SOUND FROM A FUNCTIONAL BRAND ASSET, INTO A DISTINCTIVE PROOF OF SUPERIOR QUALITY.

Our challenge was to strengthen our chocolate superiority story without talking about the process, techniques or ingredients. Through social listening and research, we discovered that the loud, unmistakable crack was not only consumers' favourite part of a Magnum, but also something ownable.

So, instead of trying to educate consumers, we leaned into what they instinctively loved and celebrated it as a symbol of indulgence, quality, and uniqueness.

This strategic pivot reframed the crack from a sonic DBA into a powerful creative device that instinctively communicates everything about Magnum's chocolate superiority. A strategic decision that can, not only support and revert the challenging scenario Magnum is

current living, but also help increase high fluency, according to System ¹ and Effie Global. ³



Sources

DATA SOURCES: Section 2

¹ TalkWalker Social Listening L5Y (2019 to 2024).

² Firefish Consumer DVOC Testimonial – 15 Deep Interviews UK Consumers 18-35, September 2024.

³ System1 & Effie Global - The Creative Dividend 2025 - 500 US and European Ads coded for 7 different types of distinctive assets used % of ads in top 25% for Final Fluency.

BRINGING THE IDEA TO LIFE

KEY ELEMENTS

Describe the key elements of your plan that activated your strategy. Outline any components that were active in the effort e.g. all integral communications, promotions, CRM program, customer experience, pricing changes, etc. that were a part of your effort.

IF OUR STRATEGY WAS ABOUT MAKING OUR CRACK LOUDER, EVERYTHING, FROM THE CREATIVE EXECUTION TO THE MEDIA STRATEGY, NEEDED TO BE SOUND-FIRST.

We needed to put our ultimate sign of quality on the spotlight through an unmissable way. We needed to make the Crack the protagonist.

And everything started with a question: what happens when distracted glances hear our loud and unmistakable Magnum crack?

So, we created a campaign that dramatized Magnum's crack, showing the chaotic reaction its loud sound triggers in different situations.

Each situation was thought to address the different platforms and their consumption moments. So, the asset for our Classic Sticks needed to be set outside, reflecting the most common moment consumers eat them. For Pints (Tubs), the asset was on a sofa watching a film, also mirroring a consumer behaviour.



Nothing Cracks Like Magnum



In terms of media, our objective was to elevate Magnum's unique sonic signature, by upweighting sound-on media platforms and placements and removing those which were visual only or sound off, ensuring our audience could once again hear the crack crystal clear.

So, our distribution strategy focused on leading with sound-on channels like AV, Audio, and Cinema, alongside innovative sound-on formats on Social and DOOH. In social media we also focused on Reels and TikTok, formats that tend to value more audio. While our competitors attempted to steal our visual cues and chase a 'Share of Visual,' we pivoted a strategy to own the 'Share of Sound' of this category.

KEY BUILDING BLOCKS

Outline the key building blocks of the creative executions for your main marketing vehicles e.g., endline, call-to-actions and format choices. If relevant, include any important changes that optimised the creative while the activity was running.

SOUND FIRST IN EVERY CHANNEL.

To really bring the crack to life, we needed every chosen channel to be audio focused. Platforms and formats that would allow consumers to hear our crack every time they encounter one of our communications.

On our social media strategy, we tackled the sound-on challenge in two ways. First, we prioritized investment in inherently sound-on platforms like TikTok with native, sensory-rich content that leveraged the platforms' audio-first nature.

Second, for platforms where sound is typically off, like Meta, we adapted our approach. Knowing that 60% of users turn the sound on for sound on formats such as Stories, we focused our investment there and utilized innovative spatial audio to create immersive, attention-grabbing ads that actively encouraged sound-on engagement¹

Other sound-immersive channels were also selected to amplify the campaign's experience, such as Cinema and Radio/Spotify.

But the most innovative execution of our 'Share of Sound' strategy was a pioneering idea to create a Synchronized 'Crack' Across Radio & DOOH.

Listeners on Heart radio heard our audio ad at the exact moment they passed a corresponding digital screen displaying our visual campaign. Besides that, several DOOH pieces also had built-in speakers that played Magnum's Crack sound whenever people walked by them.

This single activation proved remarkably effective across the entire marketing funnel, but more than that, allowed us to bring our superiority message in the best way possible offline.

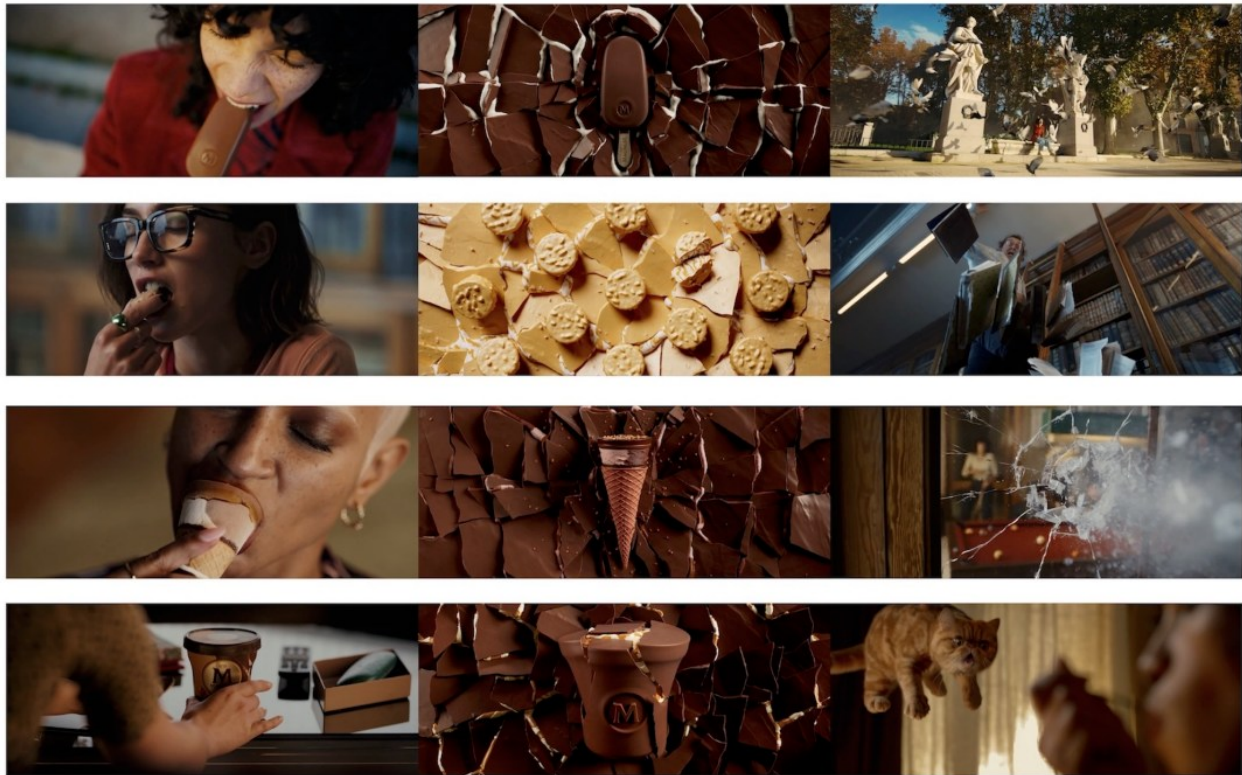
STRATEGY

Outline the rationale behind your communications strategy, experience strategy and channel plan. Explain how the integral elements worked together to drive results. If

relevant, explain how you changed your spend across channels as part of your campaign optimisation.

INTRODUCING: NOTHING CRACKS LIKE MAGNUM. A CAMPAIGN DESIGNED TO MAKE THE WORLD HEAR HOW ONLY MAGNUM HAS THICK, CRACKING CHOCOLATE.

We launched with four films that exaggerated the world reacting to our loud cracking chocolate. From a quiet library thrown into chaos by the absurd crack of a Magnum Bonbon, to a flock of birds flying away in fright as a woman cracks into a Magnum Classic Stick in a beautiful park.



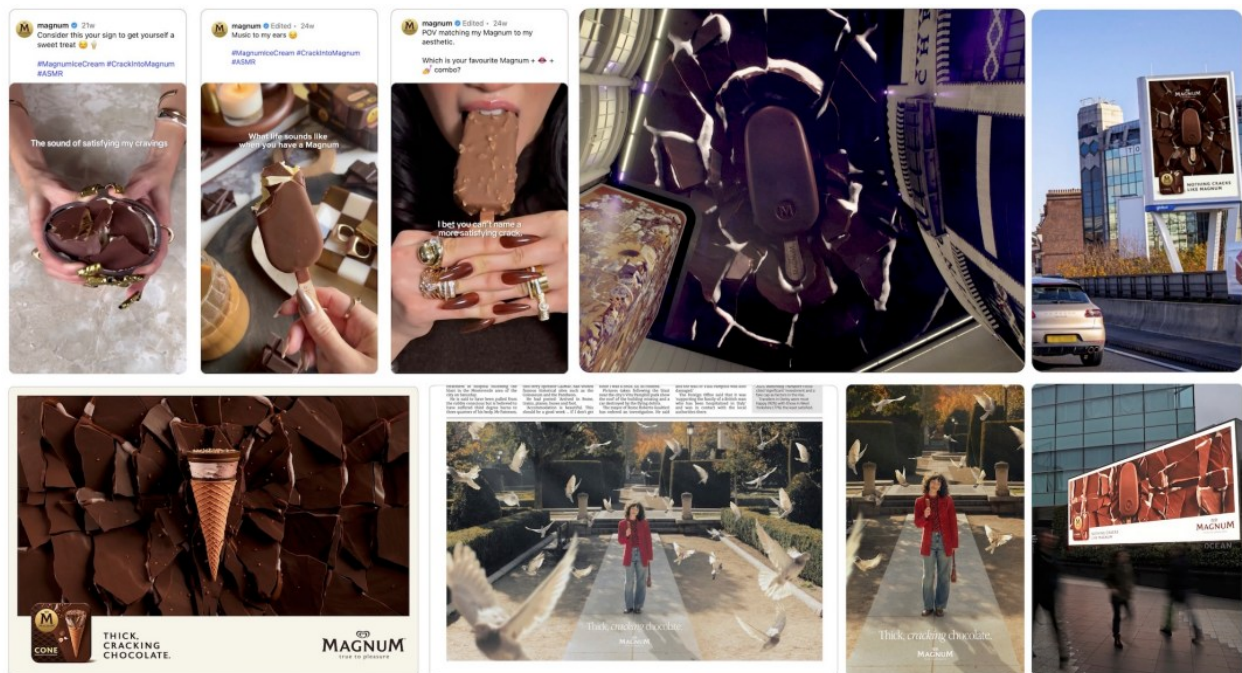
Wrapped by the tagline: “thick, cracking chocolate”, the campaign not only made our crack the protagonist of our communication, but also reinforced important quality credentials without using any functional argument. It allowed consumers to feel and hear Magnum’s superiority.

But we couldn’t stop there. We needed everyone to hear our crack.

We amplified the idea through unique activations in Radio and DOOH. Using audio-synch technology and OOH with built-in speakers, we created assets that played our cracking sound as people passed by on foot or by car.

Prints and newspapers beautifully translated the exact moment the world reacted to our crack. Additionally, several static and moving OOH pieces focused on the chocolate in each format. For that, we developed a high-end animation of the chocolate cracking, driving stronger consideration.

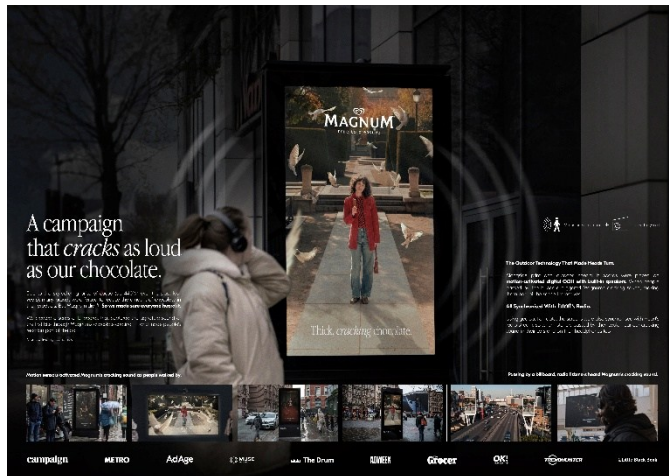
On social, a series of ASMR content brought our Crack to life in a digital native way. These assets allowed Magnum to blend seamlessly into ASMR culture, transforming our DBA into a satisfying and engaging sound, shared and replayed by consumers.



Together, these touchpoints built a consistent, multi-sensory experience. By leveraging film, OOH, radio, print, and digital, we amplified a single idea: Nothing Cracks Like Magnum.

This transformed a simple DBA into a quality signature and launched a creative platform with long-term potential. In an indulgencedriven category, we successfully made a sound synonymous with quality. And the best news: we own it.

KEY VISUAL



Sources

1. ¹Storykit, Scroll-stopping social media videos: Does music matter?, Mattison Hofstedt, April 17, 2023

RESULTS

RESULTS OVERVIEW

Results Overview

MAGNUM CRACKED SO LOUD, IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE NOT TO HEAR IT.

Our strategy delivered record-breaking results, achieving the best March market share in years. Our sales increased exponentially, also growing our Brand Power, Penetration and Perceived Worth Index.

Nothing Cracks Like Magnum successfully reverted our challenging scenario, proving that never compromising on pleasure will always pay off.

SALES SOARED, ACHIEVING THE HIGHEST MARCH MARKET SHARE IN YEARS.

Our campaign drove amazing sales results, uplifting Total Magnum value sales by +28.3% YoY in the UK¹ and by +21.7% YoY in Netherlands².

In a category with such strong seasonality, owning the beginning of the warmer months can set the tone for the entire season. It's during March when most ice cream brands start their seasonal campaigns, fighting for consumer's attention and wallets.

Since March is such a crucial moment to win in this category, our campaign was designed to peak during this key moment. And it worked.

Magnum achieved the highest March market share in years. In the UK, the campaign delivered an +130bps YoY market share uplift, the highest result since 2023. In Netherlands, the result was even more outstanding, with a +250bps YoY uplift, achieving the best performance in 5 years.³

OUR CRACKING CHOCOLATE FOUND ITS WAY BACK INTO CONSUMERS' HOMES.

Penetration increased in both countries. In the UK, the campaign delivered a +290bps YoY uplift, surpassing our initial goal and recovering Q1 2024 losses.

In Netherlands, penetration increased +150bps, hitting our target. ⁴

MOREOVER, WE STRENGTHENED OUR PLACE IN CONSUMERS’ HEARTS.

Our Brand Power increased +80bps in the UK and +30bps in Netherlands, surpassing our +20bps goal in both markets. The UK achieved the best Q1 Brand Power score in 3 years, while the Netherlands reversed declines. ⁵

The campaign also increased Magnum’s perceived worth index: +3.3 p.p. YoY growth in the UK and +4 p.p. uplift in the Netherlands compared to the previous studied quarter (Q4’2024). ⁵

MOST IMPORTANTLY, WE SUCCESSFULLY REMINDED CONSUMERS OF A SIMPLE TRUTH: NO OTHER ICE CREAM CRACKS LIKE MAGNUM.

Business Objectives

List Result:
TOTAL MAGNUM SALES INCREASED +28.3% IN THE UK AND +21.7%, DELIVERING THE BEST MARCH MARKET SHARE IN YEARS.
Context:
The outstanding sales results prove that consumers heard our crack, surpassing our 11% goal in both countries.
In the UK (03/02/25-26/04/25), we recovered the previous performance loss, delivering a +28.3% YoY Total Magnum value sales uplift. ¹ In Netherlands (24/02/25-20/04/25), sales increased +21.7% YoY. ²



During the campaign's peak in March (P3), Magnum achieved the highest market share score in 3 years in the UK and the best in 5 years in Netherlands. ³



Marketing Objectives

List Result:

WE NOT ONLY STOPPED PENETRATION DECLINE, BUT ALSO INCREASED +290bps IN THE UK AND +150bps IN NETHERLANDS.

Context:

In Q1'2024 Magnum was on a 2 year penetration decline trend in the UK. While in Netherlands, the brand was still recovering from a hard -330bps decline in Q1'2023.⁴

Our campaign flipped this reality, increasing penetration in the UK by +290bps YoY, surpassing our initial goal and achieving the highest result in 3 years.⁴

In Netherlands, we delivered the +150bps YoY uplift goal, repeating the same impressive growth seen last year.⁴



Campaign/Activity Objectives

List Result:

WE GREW OUR BRAND POWER IN +80bps IN THE UK AND +30bps IN NETHERLANDS, SURPASSING THE INITIAL GOAL AND RECOVERING THE PREVIOUS LOSSES.

Context:

In Q1'2024, Magnum lost -40bps in Netherlands, we needed to reverse this scenario and put Magnum's equity back on a growth track.

Our campaign increased Magnum's Brand Power by +30bps YoY in Netherlands, almost recovering the entire performance lost in 2024.

In the UK, Magnum's Brand Power soared, increasing in +80bps YoY and achieving the highest result in 3 years. ⁵



ADDITIONAL RESULTS

AS IMPORTAT AS SALES, OUR CAMPAIGN SUCCESSFULLY INCREASED MAGNUM'S WORTH PERCEPTION.

Magnum's Perceived Worth Index increased +3.3 p.p. in the UK (Q1'2025 vs. Q1'2024). In the Netherlands, where the metric is tracked only in Q2–Q4, Magnum achieved a +1.5 p.p. YoY uplift in Q2'2025 and an impressive +4 p.p. increase vs. Q4'2024. ⁵



OUR OOH AND RADIO ACTIVATION ALSO DELIVERED STRONG EQUITY IMPACT.

This activation proved remarkably effective across the marketing funnel: it drove a +16% uplift in spontaneous brand awareness, ensured over half correctly identified 'Nothing Cracks Like Magnum' as the key message, increased brand favourability by +34%, and lifted purchase intent by +17%.⁶

A CAMPAIGN DESIGNED TO BE TALKED ABOUT.

In Q2'2025 Magnum's online mentions related to the crack skyrocketed. In the UK, they rose +508% YoY, one of the brand's biggest uplifts worldwide. In the Netherlands, crack mentions doubled YoY (+100%), confirming the crack's cultural relevance across market.⁷

OTHER CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

- **Marketing rarely works in isolation. Outside of your effort, what else in the marketplace could have affected the results of this case - positive or negative?**

Natural Events (e.g. weather, natural phenomenon, etc.) Societal or Economic Events (e.g. changes in economic, political, social factors)

Explain the influence (or lack of influence) of the factors you selected above.

EVERYTHING INFLUENCING THE CAMPAIGN WAS PLAYING AGAINST MAGNUM.

NATURAL AND ECONOMICAL EVENTS:

In recent years Western Africa has faced unprecedented climate change. Rising temperatures have devastated cocoa crops, driving prices up over +400% in four years.⁷

This region is also responsible for 70% of global cocoa, which makes the situation even more challenging as the entire chocolate industry depend on this region's crop to get cocoa beans.⁸

As a result, chocolate price increased over the last year. According to the latest British Retail Consortium food report, chocolate was one of the main products influencing the food inflation in the UK.⁹

YET, OUR CAMPAIGN DELIVERED ONE OF THE BEST FIRST QUARTERS EVER IN MAGNUM'S HISTORY.

Despite the conditions, sales increased over +28% in the UK¹ and +21% in the Netherlands², helping the brand achieve the best March market share result in 3 years in the UK and 5 years in the Netherlands.³ Magnum's penetration also increased exponentially, growing +290bps in the UK and +150 in the Netherlands.⁴

Sources

¹ Nielsen IQ UK - 03/02/25 to 26/04/25

² Nielsen IQ Netherlands - 24/02/25 to 20/04/25

³ Nielsen Retail Q1 2025

⁴ Europanel Q1 2025

⁵ Kantar Brand Power (BGS) Q1/Q2 2025

⁶ On Device. (10/02/2025-23/02/2025). Magnum Demure UK Campaign (Feb-Apr 2025): Brand Lift Analysis.

⁷ Meltwater (MAT Q2'2025). Search scope: digital mention of 'crack' in relation to Magnum.

⁸ Climate Central Climate Change is Heating Up West Africa's Cocoa Belt, Feb 2025

⁹ British Retail Consortium July 2025, Price Monitor

INVESTMENT OVERVIEW

Investment Overview Publication Settings

Effie may not publish any part of the Investment Overview for this case.