



Dubai Lynx Creativity Report 2024

Lessons from the definitive benchmark for creative
excellence and effectiveness in the MENA region

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Welcome to the Dubai Lynx Creativity Report



SIMON COOK
CEO
LIONS

Welcome to the Dubai Lynx Creativity Report. It will deconstruct the winning work, summing up trends and themes from the 2024 Dubai Lynx Awards. Inside, you'll hear from Jury Presidents and winners, and you'll be able to benchmark yourself against MENA's top-performing creative companies with the rankings.

This region is using creativity to drive significant business growth, through memorable creative work that combines elevated craft, product innovation and applied creativity in tech.

There's a lot you can learn from this year's body of winning work, with one of the clear themes being the commercial value of investing in simple solutions that go beyond the creative to solve real business problems.

As one of the Jury Presidents, Bertille Toledano, President, BETC Paris, noticed when referring to this year's Creative Effectiveness Grand Prix winner: "It didn't just showcase the issue – it proposed a solution." That ingenuity was a red thread through much of the winning work.

Our thanks go to Motivate Media Group, our partner for Dubai Lynx, for its hard work and dedication. And thank you also to the 67 industry experts, including 11 Jury Presidents, from across 33 markets, who deliberated over this year's entries to help set the benchmark of creativity in the region. Your commitment, expertise and unique perspectives are appreciated.

To those companies that were shortlisted or won a Lynx Award this year, congratulations. You're setting the new standard in creativity and what it can achieve in the MENA region and beyond.

Subscribers to [The Work](#) can see Dubai Lynx entries from 2017 to 2024, including all the winners featured in this report.

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Dubai Lynx 2024

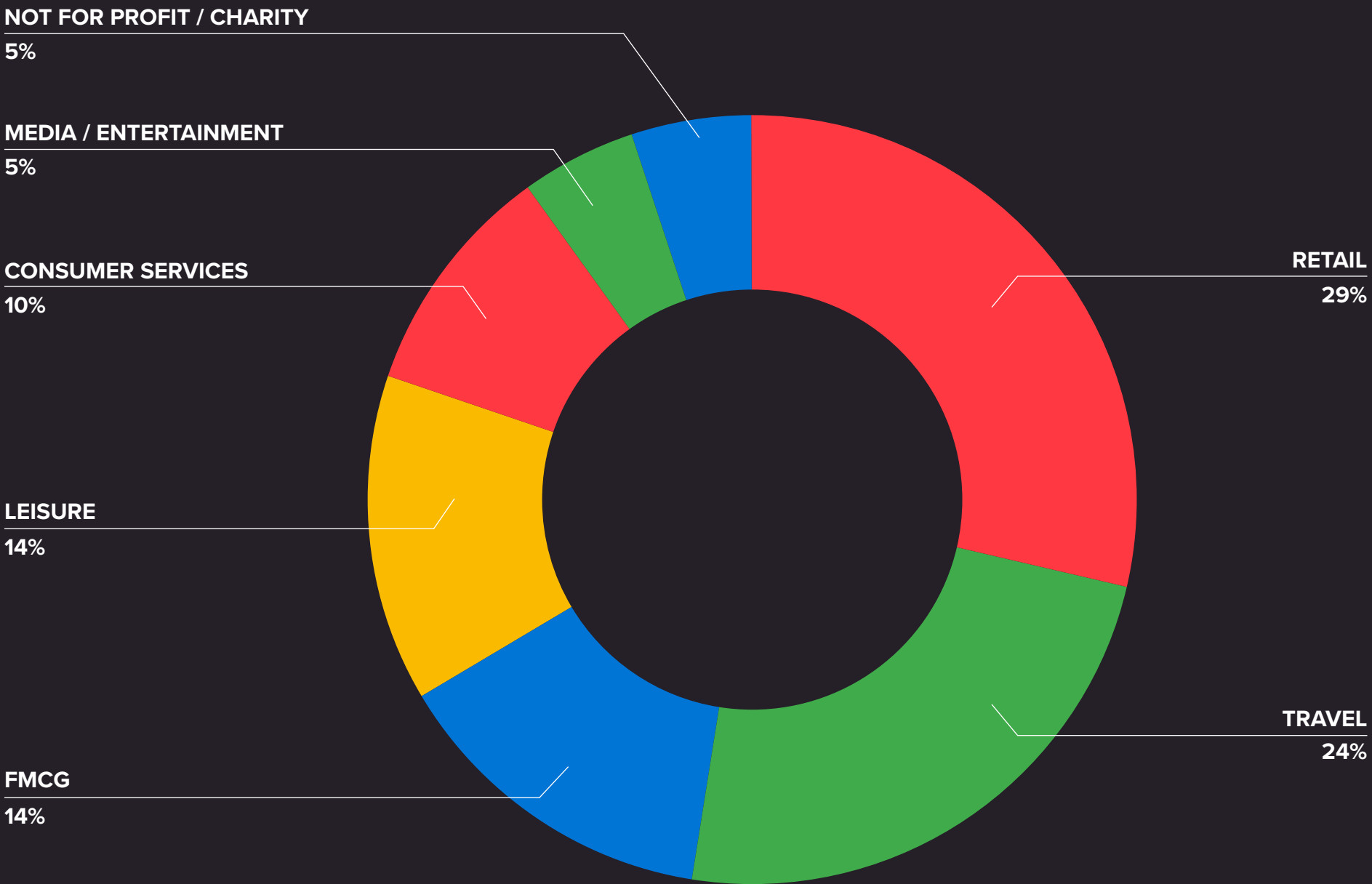
The Grand Prix winners



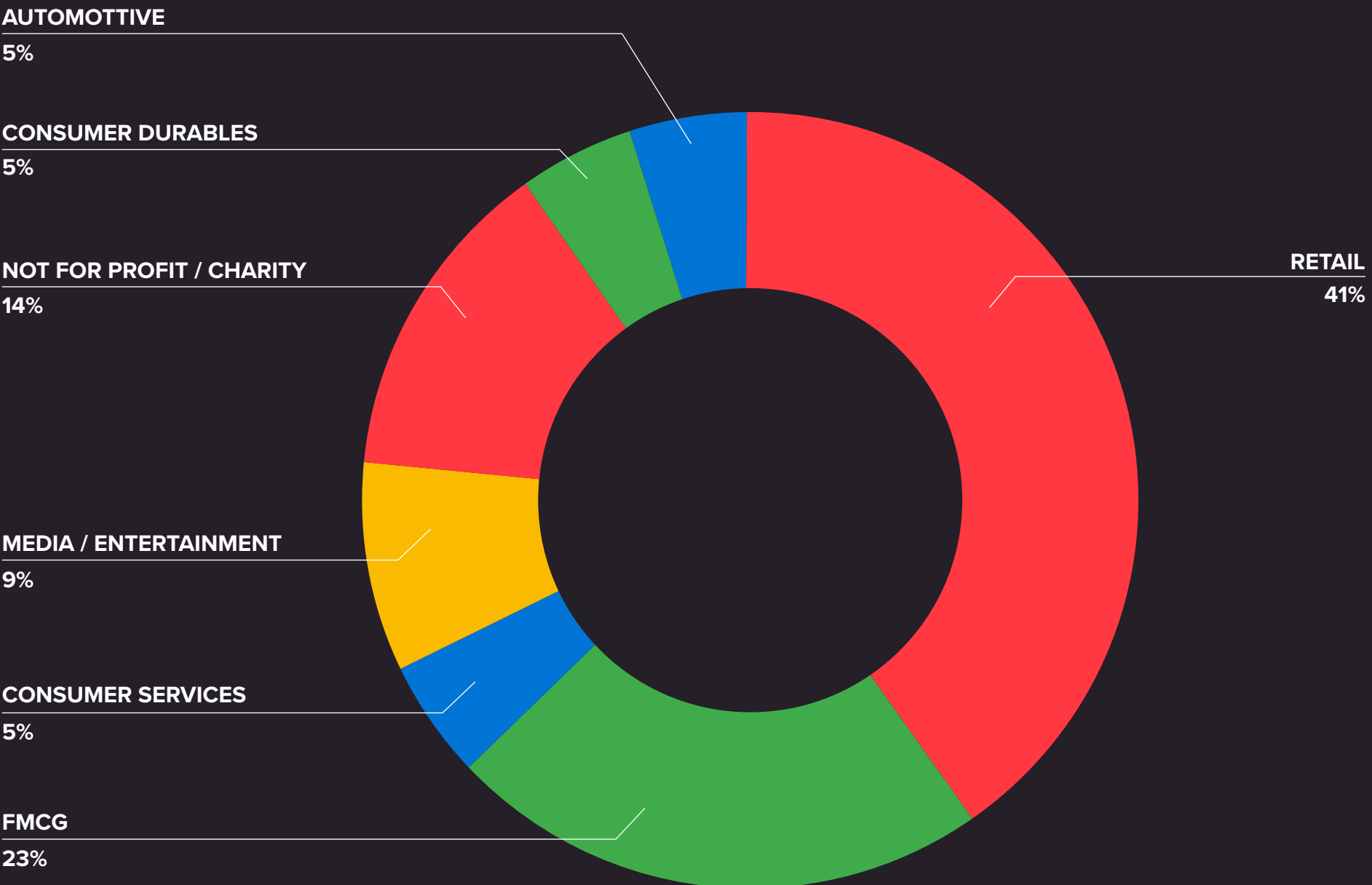
Grand Prix wins by sector

2024 vs 2023

% OF WINS 2024



% OF WINS 2023



Source: Dubai Lynx 2024



The 2024 Grand Prix winners

Brand Experience & Activation

PROTECTASBIH | SAUDIA



LEO BURNETT, JEDDAH

Airline Saudia protected Makkah’s pilgrims by giving hand-sanitising prayer beads to worshippers on flights. Relying on tea tree oil instead of alcohol, the beads reached an audience of 1.5 million pilgrims.

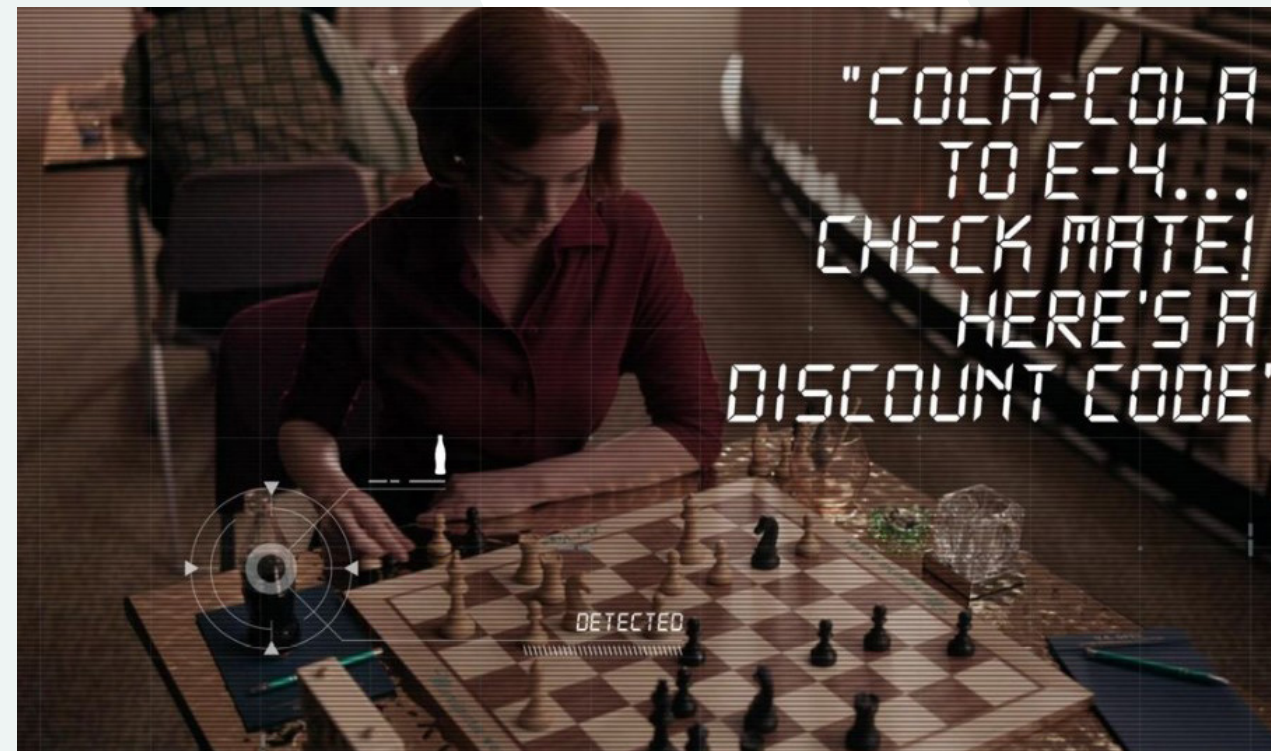
Jury President Rafael Rizuto, Chief Creative Officer US and Hispanic LATAM, Dentsu Creative, said: “I love that this innovation isn’t based on tech. The cultural insight and attention to detail make it authentic.”

[Read how it got made on pages 22–23.](#)

[PROTECTASBIH](#)

Creative Commerce

I SEE COKE | COCA-COLA



VML, DUBAI

Coca-Cola used machine learning to turn over 100 years of movie and TV Coke cameos into discount codes. The voice-activated campaign achieved a 96% offer redemption rate.

Jury President Rafael Rizuto, Chief Creative Officer US and Hispanic LATAM, Dentsu Creative, said: “An iconic brand having fun with its consumers and rewarding them. Who said creative commerce can’t be entertaining?”

[Read how it got made on pages 18–19.](#)

[I SEE COKE](#)

Creative Effectiveness

THE HIDDEN ROOM | HOME BOX



LEO BURNETT, DUBAI

A furniture collection from retailer Home Box improved the living conditions of more than 137,000 domestic workers. It also inspired a law change, boosted brand awareness by 43% and contributed to a 17% sales increase in the second half of 2022.

Jury President Bertille Toledano, President, BETC Paris, said: “This brave brand took the risk of displeasing its richer consumers to make the wider society progress. It didn’t just showcase the issue – it proposed a solution.”

[THE HIDDEN ROOM](#)



The 2024 Grand Prix winners

Creative Strategy

SUPERSTAR RAVI | ADIDAS



HAVAS MIDDLE EAST, DUBAI

To appeal to Dubai's diverse population, adidas partnered with Ravi, a popular family-owned restaurant. The unique trainer design sold out online in 15 minutes and attracted the longest line ever recorded in Dubai outside the flagship store.

Jury President Bertille Toledano, President, BETC Paris, said: "This collaboration is deeply rooted in the life of the people of Dubai. Highly emotional and well crafted, it shows how advertising can become pop culture."

[SUPERSTAR RAVI](#)

Design

PROTECTASBIH | SAUDIA



LEO BURNETT, JEDDAH

Some pilgrims avoid products containing alcohol or artificial fragrances. Designed to last the length of a pilgrimage, these hand-sanitising prayer beads rely on tea tree oil instead – and are now open-source.

Jury President Rajdeepak Das, Chairman, Leo Burnett, South Asia, and Chief Creative Officer, Publicis Groupe, South Asia, said: "What's the use of design if it doesn't work? This brought religion, healthcare and design together to solve a human problem, with culture at the centre of it."

[Read how it got made on pages 22–23.](#)

[PROTECTASBIH](#)

Digital

I SEE COKE | COCA-COLA



VML, DUBAI

To earn the hearts of Pepsi-loving Saudis, Coca-Cola created a mechanism through Alexa that rewards viewers when they spot a Coke on screen. The partnership boosted brand awareness by 236%.

Jury President Anna Qvennerstedt, Former Global Chief Creative Officer, Forsman & Bodenfors, said: "A stellar example of how AI can be used to enable world-class creative thinking. It leverages the brand legacy in an engaging and enviable way."

[Read how it got made on pages 18–19.](#)

[I SEE COKE](#)



The 2024 Grand Prix winners

Direct

PROTECTASBIH | SAUDIA



LEO BURNETT, JEDDAH

Airline Saudia combined spiritual and practical needs by creating prayer beads that sanitise hands. Distributed on flights and through contactless vending machines, the beads reached 1.5 million pilgrims on ground.

Jury President Nkgabiseng Motau, Co-Founder and Chief Creative Officer, Think Creative Africa, said: “Inspiring, insight-driven, empathetic... This isn’t advertising – it’s a physical representation of respect for the customer.”

[Read how it got made on pages 22–23.](#)

[PROTECTASBIH](#)

Entertainment

UNAUTHORIZED TRIP | SAUDI TOURISM AUTHORITY



AND US, DUBAI

The Saudi Tourism Authority boosted visits by 36% year on year by inviting footballer Lionel Messi on an unauthorised trip. When Messi missed training, a PR frenzy ensued – netting the country more than \$150m in earned media.

Jury President Ana Balarin, Chief Creative Officer, Wieden+Kennedy, said: “Tampering with football schedules was a cunning move that hacked the system. Unassuming but quite powerful.”

[UNAUTHORIZED TRIP](#)

Film

RUMBLE | GENERAL ENTERTAINMENT AUTHORITY



ACCENTURE SONG, DUBAI

A ground-shaking boxing promo hyped up the tension ahead of Tyson Fury and Francis Ngannou’s clash in Riyadh. The film was part of a multichannel campaign that achieved \$30.7m earned media value.

Jury President Gabriel Schmitt, Global Chief Creative Officer, Grey, said: “With great power comes great responsibility. If you have a big budget like this, you must make the content flawless.”

[Read how it got made on pages 16–17.](#)

[RUMBLE](#)



The 2024 Grand Prix winners

Film Craft

RUMBLE | GENERAL ENTERTAINMENT AUTHORITY



ACCENTURE SONG, DUBAI

Walls, floors and ceilings fall victim to the strength of two heavyweight champions in this 90-second boxing promo. Each punch adds to the dramatic soundtrack, a Mandarin-language cover of the Nancy Sinatra classic *Bang Bang*.

Jury President Pierre Nelwan, Managing Director, Media.Monks, said: “The level of detail in sound design was phenomenal and got us all excited. Love is in the detail, and we loved every second of it.”

[Read how it got made on pages 16–17.](#)

[RUMBLE](#)

Glass: The Award for Change

THE FEMALE FIELD | ADIDAS



HAVAS MIDDLE EAST, DUBAI

Most Arabic words associated with sport have a female gender, yet many women feel left out of the sporting world. By adding two dots – the mark used in the Arabic language to write female-gendered words – adidas made football pitches female and increased signups for all-girls training programmes by 165%.

Jury President Gabriel Schmitt, Global Chief Creative Officer, Grey, said: “I want to celebrate big brands making things that not only impact, but shatter inequality. Seeing this bold idea was inspiring.”

[THE FEMALE FIELD](#)

Healthcare

THE PROTECTIVE RHYMES | ANGHAMI



LEO BURNETT, DUBAI

Audio streaming platform Anghami gave parents a tool to teach children about consent and body safety. A playlist of rhymes and music videos starring two puppet characters generated 15m views and streams and a 186% rise in awareness of body safety among children surveyed after their exposure to the songs.

Jury President Rohini Miglani, Vice-President, Procter & Gamble International Operations SA SG, said: “It was a creative idea of the highest quality that approached the challenge with empathy and made a real difference.”

[THE PROTECTIVE RHYMES](#)



The 2024 Grand Prix winners

Industry Craft

MAQROO - THE FIRST ARABIC DYSLEXIC FONT | OMANTEL



LEO BURNETT, DUBAI

This Arabic font from telco Omantel is designed to improve readability and reduce stress levels for the 86.4 million Arabs with dyslexia. Some 23,000 people have downloaded the font.

Jury President Rajdeepak Das, Chairman, Leo Burnett, South Asia, and Chief Creative Officer, Publicis Groupe, South Asia, said: "This won because it had craft at the centre. Not just to beautify the work, but to help people. If implemented right, it could impact millions of lives for good."

[MAQROO - THE FIRST ARABIC DYSLEXIC FONT](#)

Integrated

BATTLE OF THE BADDEST | GENERAL ENTERTAINMENT AUTHORITY



ACCENTURE SONG, DUBAI

The 'Battle of the Baddest' boxing promo featured a cinematic trailer, regal print posters, DOOH, AR filters and digital and real-world activations. The fighters wore the costumes from the campaign at the event, which attracted a 71% rise in visitors compared with the previous season.

Jury President Gabriel Schmitt, Global Chief Creative Officer, Grey, said: "With Integrated, you're usually caught between celebrating a centrepiece idea surrounded by an architecture of channels or making the architecture of channels the idea. This managed to do both."

[BATTLE OF THE BADDEST](#)

Media

FREQUENCIES OF PEACE | BABYSHOP



FP7 MCCANN, DUBAI

As part of its mission to give every child the best start in life, children's clothes retailer Babyshop worked with neuroscientists and music therapists to create a lullaby that could soothe children in war-affected areas. The melody reached 4 million listeners in Syria each night via radio stations and loudspeakers in refugee camps.

Jury President Enyi Nwosu, Chief Strategy Officer, UM London, said: "It's tough for brands to use their voice authentically to tackle difficult issues, but Babyshop did it brilliantly, with incredible results felt across the world."

[FREQUENCIES OF PEACE](#)



The 2024 Grand Prix winners

OUTDOOR

THE LOST CAMEL | EMIRATES DEVELOPMENT BANK



LIVINGROOM COMMUNICATION, DUBAI

Fifty percent of camel deaths in the UAE are caused by plastic ingestion. A giant 3D-printed camel made from recycled plastic reminded audiences, earning 55m impressions and catching attention at COP28. A month after the event, the government brought in a ban on single-use plastic.

Jury President Nkgabiseng Motau, Co-Founder and Chief Creative Officer, Think Creative Africa, said: “This is a powerful symbol using a native icon to deliver an urgent message.”

[THE LOST CAMEL](#)

PR

PROTECTASBIH | SAUDIA



LEO BURNETT, JEDDAH

Airline Saudia designed the world’s first sanitising prayer beads. Highlighting the brand’s commitment to hygiene and safety, it became the number 1 trending topic in Saudi Arabia and generated \$2.9m in earned media.

Jury President Anthony Chelvanathan, Chief Creative Officer, Edelman Canada, said: “A seamless integration of brand and craft, it saw massively positive results because it understood human behaviour. The problem you’re solving is always key.”

[Read how it got made on pages 22–23.](#)

[PROTECTASBIH](#)

PRINT & PUBLISHING

SPACE BEANS | BOON



GREY, DUBAI

Dubai-based coffee brand Boon linked its exploration of flavours and blends to the inquisitive spirit of the UAE’s space programme by crafting space-inspired coffee visuals. The photos increased footfall in-store by 36% on weekdays and 74.3% at weekends.

Jury President Gabriel Schmitt, Global Chief Creative Officer, Grey, said: “This unanimous Grand Prix managed to be topical while talking about the product benefit in a visually stunning way. That’s incredibly hard to do.”

[SPACE BEANS](#)



The 2024 Grand Prix winners

RADIO & AUDIO

I SEE COKE | COCA-COLA



VML, DUBAI

Coca-Cola used Alexa's voice activation feature to offer discount codes to eagle-eyed users who spotted its brand in TV shows and films. It achieved a 96% conversion rate in coupon redemptions.

Jury President Gabriel Schmitt, Global Chief Creative Officer, Grey, said: "The idea that rose to the top doesn't use audio as an end, but as a means to hijack what you're watching."

[Read how it got made on pages 18–19.](#)

[I SEE COKE](#)

SOCIAL & INFLUENCER

BIRTHMARK STORIES | HUNGERSTATION



VML, RIYADH

By playing on Arab folklore, food delivery app HungerStation reminded expectant mothers that it could satisfy their cravings. A campaign based on snack-shaped birthmark myths earned the platform 120,000 new customers.

Jury President Anna Qvennerstedt, Former Global Chief Creative Officer, Forsman & Bodenfors, said: "A beautiful and very social example of cultural insight and unexpected creativity. It made all the sense in the world for HungerStation."

[BIRTHMARK STORIES](#)

GRAND PRIX FOR GOOD

OUT OF HOME | JOOD



VML, CASABLANCA

Homelessness NGO JOOD found an unexpected resource to help people affected by Morocco's earthquake: outdoor billboards. Working with more than 65 brands, it repurposed the billboards as tents for more than 400 families.

Jury President Gabriel Schmitt, Global Chief Creative Officer, Grey, said: "This Grand Prix shows the best side of our industry. It can and should be scaled. So much so that the Jury would like to help make this a global programme."

[OUT OF HOME](#)



Trends from the winning work





Offbeat entertainment

Brands in the MENA region are grabbing attention in novel ways and entertaining audiences with fun and memorable content.

To promote the partnership between Etihad Airways and the team behind *Mission: Impossible – Dead Reckoning Part One*, Etihad cabin crew skydived while playing the famous *Mission Impossible* theme tune as an orchestra, underlining the airline's 'nothing is impossible' commitment to its passengers. [‘Impossible Orchestra’](#), by Impact BBDO, Dubai, won a Silver in Entertainment and a Bronze in Film Craft.

And telco Orange's [‘Whatever Is Lucky’](#) parodied superstitions around spectators watching football. Promoting its partnership with the African Cup of Nations tournament, a series of films included a man wearing his ‘lucky jersey’ and a father locking his son up, all in an attempt to recreate the same conditions from 2010, when Egypt last won a trophy. By Cairo-based Tarek Nour Advertising, it grew Orange's revenue by 14% and took a Bronze in Entertainment and in Film.

IMPOSSIBLE ORCHESTRA | ETIHAD AIRWAYS



IMPACT BBDO, DUBAI

SILVER, ENTERTAINMENT LYNX



In action: Offbeat entertainment

The boxing boom

When World Heavyweight Champion Tyson Fury and UFC Champion Francis Ngannou were meeting in the ring, The General Entertainment Authority's [‘The Battle of The Baddest’](#) made sure everyone knew about it. Netting the Integrated Grand Prix, it blended cinema, digital, experiential, PR and social media, among other channels. And its hero film, [‘Rumble’](#), by Accenture Song, Dubai, won the Grand Prix in both Film and Film Craft for its fresh take on match promotions. In a similar vein, [‘Day of Reckoning’](#) by Riyadh-based BigTime Creative Shop pushed an eight-match event as part of Riyadh Season. Shortlisted in Film, Film Craft and Industry Craft, it used the 16 boxers, a touch of zombie humour and the backdrop of the Roman Colosseum to captivate boxing enthusiasts worldwide.

Playful food and drink

Food and drink brands delighted audiences with fun activations that raised brand awareness and sales. Coca-Cola, with VML, Dubai, created an Alexa ‘skill’ that rewards viewers when they spot a Coke on screen. Winning Grands Prix in Creative Commerce, Digital and Radio & Audio, [‘I See Coke’](#) boosted brand awareness by 236%. Oreo's [‘Lunar Treats’](#) saw the biscuit brand teach younger people about the role of the moon during Ramadan in a playful way. From Saatchi & Saatchi ME, Dubai, It lifted sales by 33% and won a Silver in Direct and in Digital. Fast food chain Kudu used a quirk of the Saudi language when it launched a shrimp sandwich. [‘Shrimps vs. Prawns’](#) saw Kudu launch identical sandwiches under the different words for shrimp. By VML, Riyadh, it led to Kudu's highest sales month and won a Bronze in Social & Influencer and in PR.

And Heinz ketchup marked the Formula 1 Grand Prix in Abu Dhabi by introducing its own edge-of-your-seat version on YouTube. The [‘Slowmaster 57’](#), a slide down which Heinz ketchup was poured alongside rival ketchup, demonstrated that Heinz was slower and therefore the real deal. By FP7 McCann, Dubai, it was shortlisted in Outdoor.

DAY OF RECKONING | RIYADH SEASON



BIGTIME CREATIVE SHOP, RIYADH

SHORTLISTED, FILM LYNX

Data entertains and informs

A Lebanese ‘lotto expert’ showed the maths around lottery odds vs the chances of having access to 24/7 electricity, escape potholes or elect a president. [‘Lebanese Odds’](#) for Loto Libanais, by Impact BBDO, Dubai, led to a 22% increase in ticket sales and a Bronze in Brand Experience & Activation.

UAE-based bookstore chain Kinokuniya reframed reading as an entertaining and eco-friendly pastime with [‘Offset Boxset’](#). By Saatchi & Saatchi ME, Dubai, it resulted in a reduction of 311 kg CO₂ and a 38% increase in the uptake of the Kinokuniya loyalty card among Gen Z. Kinokuniya also took a Gold in Creative Effectiveness for [‘Time to Read’](#) that showed in imaginative ways how many books people could read in the time they instead spend on social media.



How it got made

‘Rumble’: “Finding the space for levity was so important”

Tres Colacion and **Giancarlo Rodas**, Executive Creative Directors at Droga5, and **Roger Morán**, Senior Producer, Film, Droga5, New York, reflect on how ‘Rumble’ has rewritten the rulebook for boxing promotions.

What made you seek out a fresh approach?

TC: Historical title fights all look the same. We felt it needed that edge, that Hollywood thing.

What craft techniques did you use to communicate the drama and tension in boxing?

TC: Craft builds when you care about the film – every layer is so important. Francis and Tyson have their own personalities. ‘Rumble’ reveals the showman in Tyson and the determination in Francis.

RUMBLE | GENERAL ENTERTAINMENT AUTHORITY



ACCENTURE SONG, DUBAI

GRAND PRIX, FILM LYNX



How it got made

Sound design is key to this piece – how did you achieve certain effects?

RM: We worked with Sam Ashwell at [London-based audio post-production company] 750mph. He went to a gym to capture those sounds himself and he went back and forth on the build, from the crunchy beginning that feels real and in-your-face to where it gets muffled. We worked backwards on certain effects, like the wall cracking.

When did you decide on the soundtrack?

TC: The music supervisor did the homework and found this Betty Chung version of [Nancy Sinatra song] *Bang Bang* in Mandarin. The action fits with the lyrics, and it doesn't distract from all the work in sound design and direction.

There's a levity to this piece. Was that important to you?

TC: One of the biggest debates we had as a team was around the humour. But it's a very serious fight, so finding the space for levity was so important.

GR: It's entertainment, so it's meant to be bombastic, and that's funny. David Droga says 'create something people want to watch' over and over again. You can play this in 10 years' time because it's a timeless story about two people about to confront each other.

If you look at the region and how it's promoting fights now, it's really fun, and I think we contributed to that. The way sport and fights are promoted is now changing. That's a lasting legacy.

[RUMBLE](#)

RUMBLE | GENERAL ENTERTAINMENT AUTHORITY



ACCENTURE SONG, DUBAI

GRAND PRIX, FILM LYNX

“It's a timeless story about two people about to confront each other”



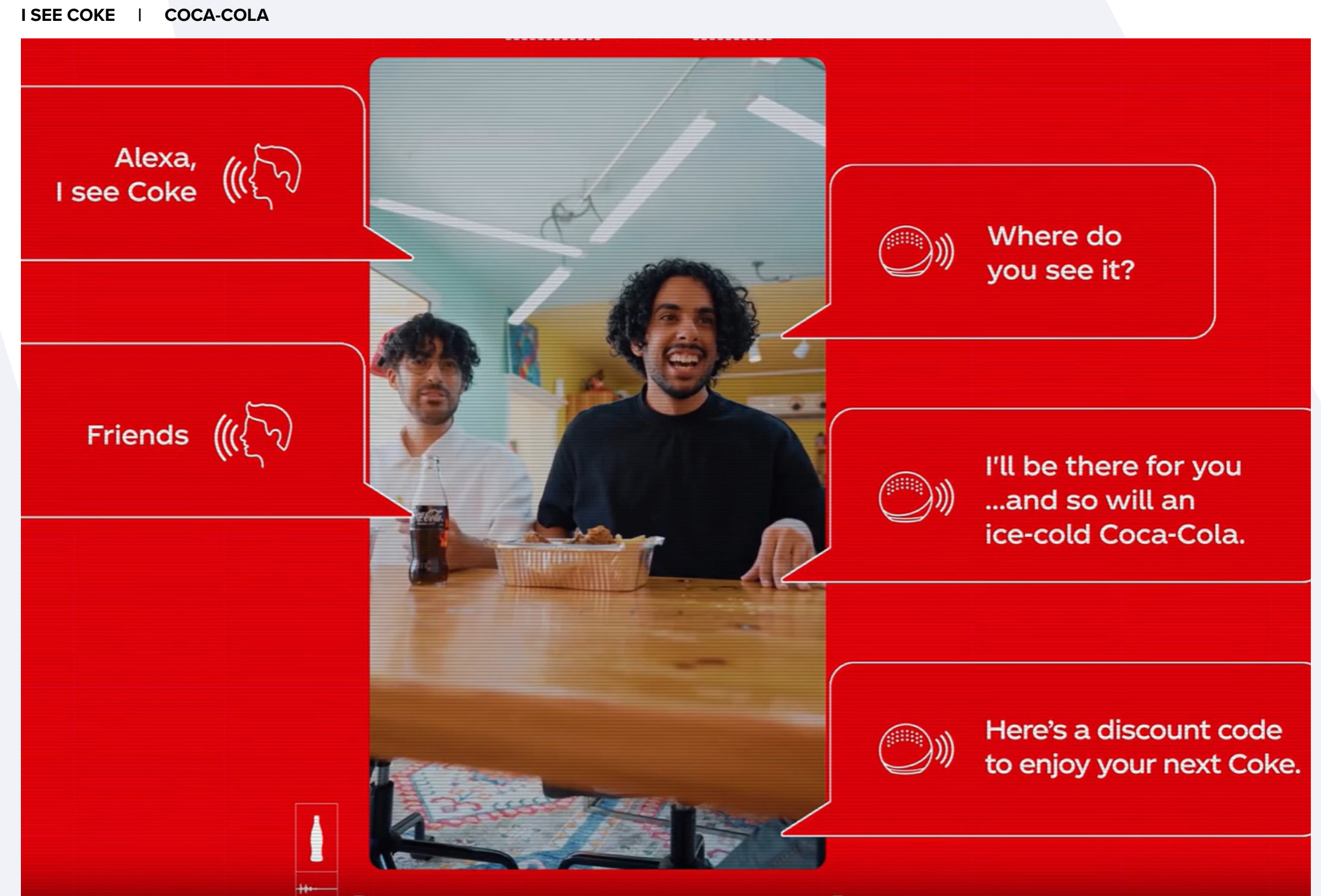
How it got made

‘I See Coke’: “Its challenger status in Saudi Arabia means it can be a bit riskier and more irreverent”

Manuel Bordé, Global Chief Creative Officer, VML Commerce, New York, explains how ‘I See Coke’ leveraged Coke’s position in pop culture to steal share from market leader Pepsi.

Describe Coke’s status in Saudi Arabia.

Coke in Saudi Arabia is a challenger brand, as Pepsi came into the market first. While awareness is still high for this iconic brand, connecting with the community was key to changing behaviour and encouraging people to try it. With the basics of price, distribution and product taken care of, the brand needed to find a way to create an appreciation for the product that reflected how consumers in market made purchases.



VML, DUBAI

GRAND PRIX, DIGITAL LYNX



How it got made

Do you think this promotion stood out because of its novelty factor?

It's a very content-heavy region, with people drawn to movies and entertainment. Coke successfully infiltrated culture and turned a beloved daily activity into a moment to show its irreverent side. The growing usage of Alexa allowed it to add interactivity to thousands of scenes that Saudis connected with emotionally – and with humour.

Explain the creative process behind 'I See Coke'.

It took a team of 15 copywriters combined with machine learning to identify and write the customised

replies. Everything written in English needed to be translated into Arabic. We also used social content to drop 'hints' to our followers to drive more engagement. This created almost an impulsive buying scenario in an interactive format that trumped the Pepsi cravings.

Is it still working? If so, how will you build on it?

The skill is still working, and we want to elevate it to tell more of a story – for instance, adding cool facts into the storytelling based on the Coke appearance in content.

[I SEE COKE](#)

I SEE COKE | COCA-COLA



VML, DUBAI

GRAND PRIX, DIGITAL LYNX

“It took a team of 15 copywriters combined with machine learning to identify and write the customised replies”



Transformative design

The transformative power of design in breaking down barriers and reshaping societal norms was a recurrent theme.

Proving design can transcend aesthetics and be of practical use was a range of work that relied on resourcefulness, finding new functions for products or materials – including actual ads. For instance, Grand Prix for Good winner [‘Out of Home’](#), by VML, Casablanca, repurposed billboards as tents for more than 400 families affected by Morocco’s earthquake.

Other winners used typography to tell a story or reimagine brand identity. Super-app Careem designed a bespoke font as part of a new visual identity that attracted 1.9 million new customers. [‘Careem Brand Refresh’](#), an in-house piece, took Silver in Design and Industry Craft.

OUT OF HOME | JOOD



VML, CASABLANCA

DUBAI LYNX GRAND PRIX FOR GOOD



In action: Transformative design

Encourage upcycling

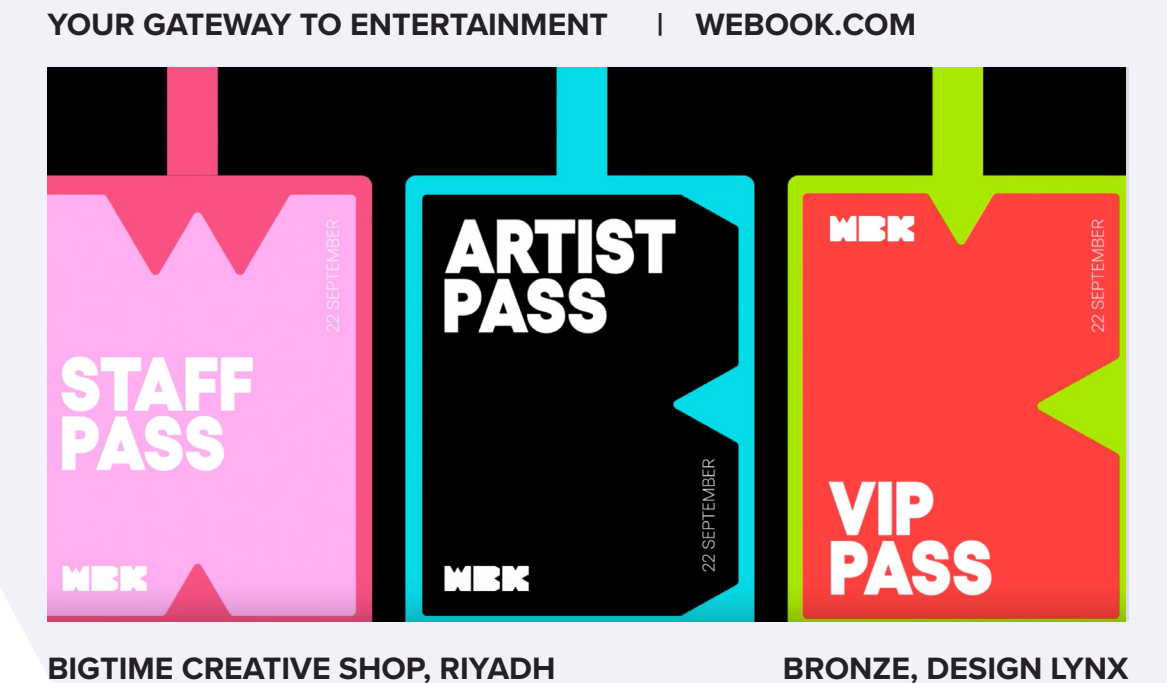
Brands used waste products to inspire new creations. Outdoor Grand Prix winner Emirates Development Bank targeted decision-makers with a camel made from recycled plastic litter from the desert. [‘The Lost Camel’](#), from Livingroom Communication, Dubai, achieved \$775,000 in earned media. Meanwhile, [‘Hearing Trade’](#) from telco STC and VML, Riyadh, turned old phones into low-cost hearing aids. It won Bronze in Healthcare. And NBA’s [‘Nets for Change’](#) used discarded fishing nets to create more than 1050 basketball hoops for women players. By Leo Burnett, Dubai, it was Shortlisted for four Awards,

Make fonts accessible

New fonts challenged social norms or helped shape brand identity. [‘Maqroo - The First Arabic Dyslexic Font’](#) improved readability for more than 23,000 people with dyslexia. The typeface, from telco Omantel and Leo Burnett, Dubai, took the Industry Craft Grand Prix. [‘Zael - The Disappearing Font’](#), a design that fades as its creator loses his eyesight, helped reduce illegal font downloads by 50%. The work, by Prototype and Leo Burnett, Dubai, took three Awards, including Silver in Industry Craft. And a rebrand saw ticketing and streaming platform Webook combine its name and logo to create a new typeface. [‘Your Gateway to Entertainment’](#), by BigTime Creative Shop, Riyadh, took Bronze in Design.

Invest in dual-function offerings

Winning and shortlisted brands found new functions for products or services. Airline Saudia scooped four Grands Prix by designing prayer beads that doubled as hand sanitiser. [‘ProtecTasbih’](#), by Leo Burnett, Jeddah, achieved \$2.9m in earned media and increased brand love by 65%. Sports newspaper *Ariyadiyah* used its printing press to create life-sized sports courts to combat obesity. [‘Newspaper Courts’](#), by SRMG Labs, Riyadh, achieved more than \$1.5m in earned media and won Gold in Outdoor and Print & Publishing. And shortlisted in Brand Experience & Activation was [‘Total Sports and Fitness Hotel’](#). This work, by Impact BBDO, Dubai, saw a local sports shop increase sales by 28% by doubling up as a hotel for cricket fans.





How it got made

‘ProtecTasbih’: “It was a key opportunity to show pilgrims we have a space on their spiritual journey”

Shukri Aljudaibi, General Manager, Brand & Marketing Communications, Saudia, and **Essam Akhonbay**, Vice-President, Marketing, Saudia, explain how a natural design solution helped keep religious travellers safe.

How did you come up with the idea?

Every year, millions of pilgrims from around the world travel to Makkah for the pilgrimages Hajj and Umrah. We saw a genuine need for people to embark on these journeys without fearing poor hygiene due to crowded environments. As a popular airline for religious travel to Makkah, Saudia

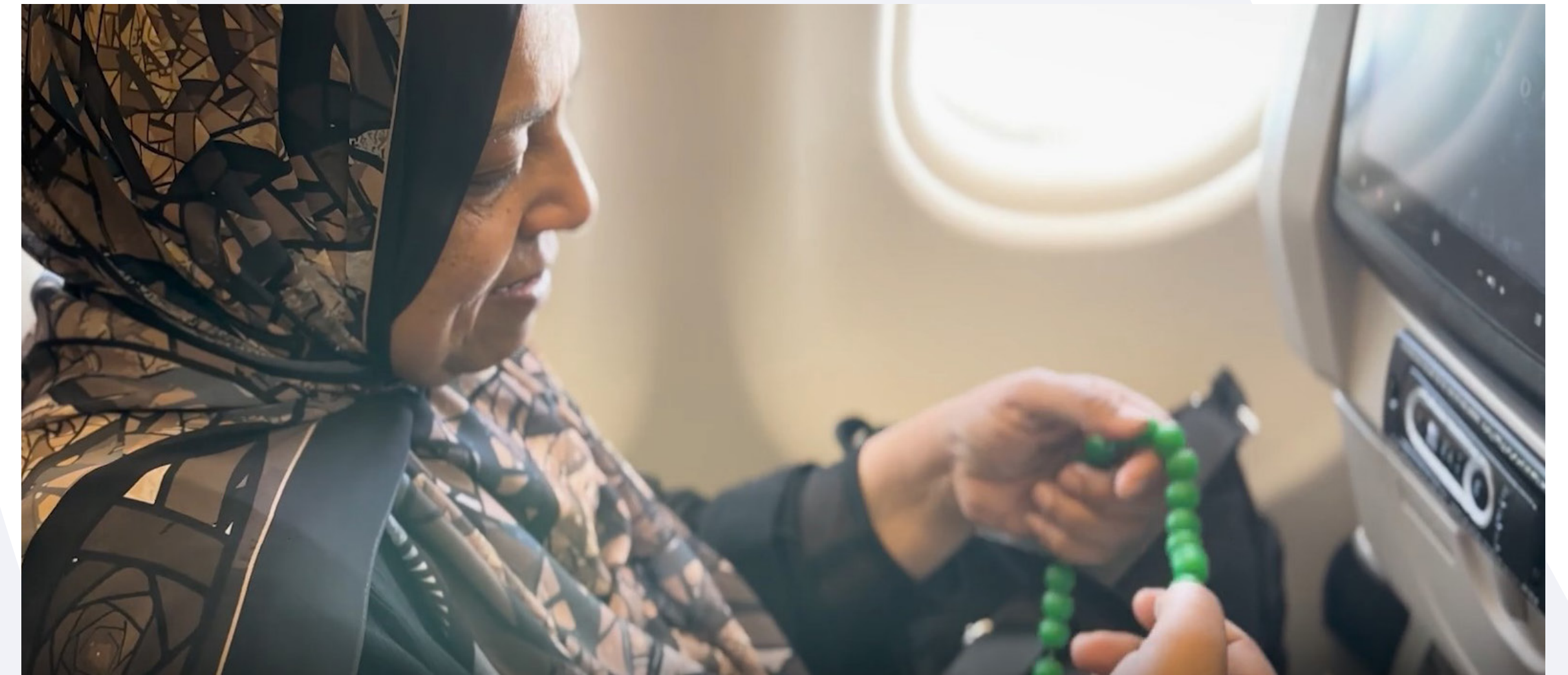
wanted to create a new product to help guests have a healthier journey.

Did you face any challenges during product development?

For religious reasons, we couldn’t use alcohol to kill the germs. The product also couldn’t have a scent. We used tea tree oil instead, which disrupts the cell membrane of the bacteria. We then had to integrate it into a semi-solid compound and used a moulding technique to develop a solid bead underneath it.

Also, prayer beads need to be in increments of 33 beads. Commonly, Islamic prayer beads have 99 beads. In order to create beads that had

PROTECTASBIH | SAUDIA



LEO BURNETT, JEDDAH

GRAND PRIX PR

enough sanitiser, we had to bring down the count to 33.



How it got made

How important was it that these beads were recyclable?

We didn't want to solve a problem by creating another, so zero waste was key. The compound shell is designed to last the duration of the pilgrimage. Once this is used up, there's a core shell underneath that allows the product to continue to be used as prayer beads.

Were there many iterations of the design?

The beads were handed out on air-conditioned flights and taken to a pilgrimage, which is outdoors in a very warm climate. We carried out tests to ensure that the beads could withstand these different climates and temperatures.

Why did this make sense for Saudia?

It was a key opportunity for Saudia to show pilgrims that we have a space on their spiritual journey and emphasise health and safety. It's normal for airlines to offer a gift to visitors. But we didn't want to just buy something and distribute it. We created a new product that would genuinely help our customers.

Are there any plans to build on this piece?

For the time being, our focus is to gather feedback and make the product even better. In the future, we might evolve the product in a different format as long as it serves our guests.

[PROTECTASBIH](#)

PROTECTASBIH | SAUDIA



LEO BURNETT, JEDDAH

GRAND PRIX PR

“Zero waste was key – we didn't want to solve a problem by creating another”



New approaches to wellbeing

Winning and shortlisted work displayed a range of ideas and approaches to people's wellbeing with creativity and innovation at its core. For instance, Lebanese women don't get mammograms as often as they should. So news station MTV used pester power: Lebanese children refused to take tests in school until their mothers booked a mammogram. By TBWA\RAAD Dubai, it prompted a 32% rise in mammograms. ['Test for a Test'](#) was shortlisted in Direct and Healthcare.

And vitamin supplement brand Solgar's ['Human Recharge Stations'](#) addressed vitamin D deficiency in the UAE by inviting people to stand on decals in Dubai for a few moments. As they stood, they could access a QR code that unlocked more information about the importance of vitamin D. It reached 400,000 individuals. By McCann Health, Dubai, it was shortlisted in Healthcare.

HUMAN RECHARGE STATIONS | SOLGAR



MCCANN HEALTH, DUBAI

SHORTLISTED, HEALTHCARE LYNX



In action: New approaches to wellbeing

Prioritise women's health

Initiatives to help women's physical and mental health were common among this year's winning entries. Dove's ['Welcome to Womanhood'](#) campaign aimed to erase the criticism that young women hear and instead focus on building up their self-esteem. Focusing on three 11–16-year-olds, the work by Film Pudding, Dubai, took a Bronze in Film Craft.

Global healthcare company Organon's ['Mis\[s\]diagnosed'](#) initiative highlighted that cardiovascular issues in women can show up through unexpected symptoms. It sent influencers and healthcare professionals awareness kits. Some 28.7 million women now know the signs, and Organon enjoyed a 17% uplift in women interested in clinical trials. By MullenLowe MENA, Dubai, it took a Gold in Healthcare.

Finally, ['The Touchpoint Collection'](#) reminded women in Jordan to self-check with a sports bra made with sportswear brand GYMKUMA. By VML, Amman, it took a Bronze in Media.

Heal with audio

Wellbeing initiatives often used audio to connect with audiences in a more intimate way. Retailer Babyshop provided Syrian children with a soothing lullaby to help those in war-affected areas sleep soundly. It reached 4 million listeners in Syria each night via radio stations and loudspeakers in refugee camps. By FP7 McCann, Dubai, ['Frequencies of Peace'](#) won the Media Grand Prix.

Sonic branding and sound production agency Sixième Son launched a collection of everyday noises that trigger people with PTSD because they resemble the sounds of conflict or refugee camps. Those accessing ['Sound Affects'](#) online to buy the sounds were also donating to nonprofits helping PTSD sufferers. By Saatchi & Saatchi ME, Dubai, It earned \$1.5m in media and took Silver in Radio & Audio.

And Pakistani fintech company easypaisa helped women who can't read to understand their marriage contract by providing an accessible audio version via mobile phones, landlines and the easypaisa app. ['Audio Nikahnama'](#), by Impact BBDO, Dubai, took three Golds: Radio & Audio, Glass and Integrated.

Focus on children

Children were the focus of many winning initiatives that aimed to protect and empathise with them. Rhymes and music videos starring two puppets helped children learn about boundaries via audio streaming platform Anghami. ['The Protective Rhymes'](#), by Leo Burnett, Dubai, took the Healthcare Grand Prix.

UN Women's ['Child Wedding Cards'](#) invited 5–15-year-old girls to sketch wedding invites that were then sent to lawmakers to urge them to raise the legal age of marriage to 18. The Federal Shariat Court, the highest religious court in the country, announced a landmark edict stating that 18 is the minimum age for marriage. By Impact BBDO, Dubai, it took a Gold in Media.

Home Centre's ['The Creature'](#) also used children's drawings as a starting point for a powerful campaign about step-parents. The home and furniture retailer looked at drawings of stepdads where they were represented by scary creatures. Drawing on that idea, Home Centre's emotional film showed how stepdads transformed from scary creatures to men who 'stepped up'. By Leo Burnett, Dubai, it won a Gold in Film.

MIS[S]DIAGNOSED | ORGANON



MULLENLOWE MENA, DUBAI

GOLD, HEALTHCARE LYNX



How it got made

‘Audio Nikahnama’: “The sign of a powerful campaign is when a man has a tough time explaining why they’re against it”

Rifah Qadri, Head of Marketing at easypaisa, and CEO and Chief Creative Officer, **Atiya Zaidi**, and Chief Creative Officer, **Ali Rez**, Impact BBDO Group, MENAP, explain how they helped women in Pakistan make more informed decisions around marriage contracts.

What was the brief?

AR: We’d been speaking to easypaisa and were aware that the brand needed to build tools to empower women and lead to financial inclusion. Alongside that, at Impact BBDO, we collect a lot of data around what’s happening in culture in society. We’d seen this peculiar cultural phenomenon where marriage contracts for women are only delivered in written form. In a country where half of the women can’t read, that’s very odd. We wanted a simple, viable solution that would help women understand their marriage contract and give them a direct link to financial ownership. We felt there was a good link between this need and what easypaisa was doing with giving

AUDIO NIKAHNAMA | EASYPAISA



IMPACT BBDO, DUBAI

GOLD LYNX, GLASS: THE AWARD FOR CHANGE

women knowledge about their financial rights. So the idea was born out of insightful knowledge of a need to fix something collected through data and social listening.

Are other fintech brands in the region doing similar things?

RQ: In the fintech industry, there’s a mandate around women’s empowerment and financial inclusion. But nobody’s been able to crack it. There’s a lot of superficial activity, like



How it got made

launching a women's debit card for the sake of it. We knew that we wanted to talk about actual issues that empower women and enable financial inclusivity. This wasn't just a problem for women who can't read: it's a universal problem for all women.

Most women – 95% – don't have access to do their marriage contracts. They get it either just in time for their wedding or the day before. They don't know what's been crossed out, they don't add anything to it because they don't know enough about it. Nobody in fintech is tackling these issues.

AZ: Most brands in Pakistan pay lip service. "You're a superwoman, you're a mum, you can do this and that." That doesn't make an impact. Financial independence would actually empower women in this country. The client was so involved,

and that changed the product. You can hear it in seven languages. There's an element where you can call and someone will call you back. That takes a lot more effort from easypaisa.

How did you combine channels to ensure that this was accessible to all women?

RQ: We knew that some people who can't read can access YouTube and TikTok. But we knew it was going to be a challenge because smartphone penetration for women is very low in Pakistan.

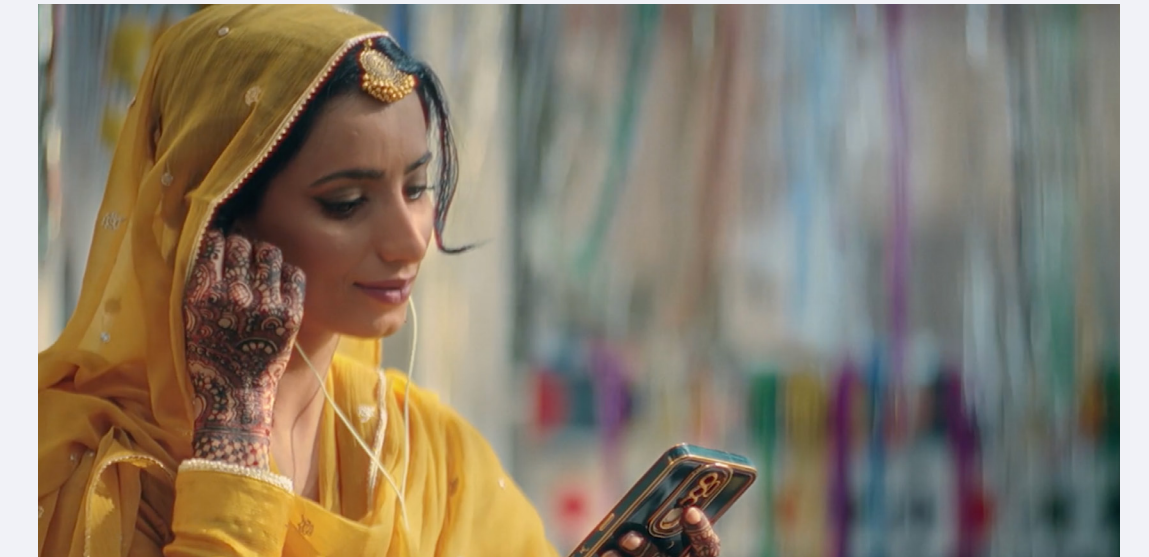
So we knew we needed a combination of both hotline and app integrations to drive reach. We also didn't want to say that we'd be driving business because we weren't trying to get people to invest in our app. We also did activations. When a bride starts getting ready in Pakistan,

they go to beauty parlours. Every small city has a beauty parlour. We decided to be available there when they're there for their services.

It didn't matter whether they were married or not – everybody talked about it, even older women. I got a voice note from an older woman saying that she wished it had existed when she got married. That was the best feedback for me.

AR: When women started sharing their stories, it made us realise the importance of it. It's terrifying to sign a contract for the rest of your life, and either you can't read it or you have no access to it. The recording is really simple. It explains each clause step by step and tells you what you're supposed to ask. Now women understand what's in it, the power they suddenly have is remarkable.

AUDIO NIKAHNAMA | EASYPAISA



IMPACT BBDO, DUBAI | GOLD LYNX, GLASS: THE AWARD FOR CHANGE

Were you worried about facing backlash from male customers?

RQ: 100%. And we faced a lot of internal backlash. It was a challenge to sell this to the rest of the company. We'd prepared a crisis communication plan when we went ahead, but nothing negative came back. All we got was positivity, even from men.



How it got made

AR: The sign of a powerful campaign is that it gets to a point where a man would have a tough time explaining why they're against it. You put them in a position where they can't really oppose it because there would only be one explanation – they want to control their wife. The beauty of this is that it was nothing controversial. People had to acknowledge that it was just the right thing to do.

AZ: easypaisa's brand positioning is all about making life easy. That was the biggest challenge for the marriage contract. Even for someone educated, it's written in verbose, outdated language. This landed perfectly on the brand positioning of making life easy. It wasn't just someone reading the contract – it was someone explaining it.

RQ: Our brand health has gone up 7% with a female audience. That tells us

that we've hit the right chord and we're following up. We've now reached half a million people that have accessed this app.

What did you learn?

AR: When you identify a problem that's insightful to local culture, it resonates with people. If you provide a solution that's easily accessible, it's not just talk: it's a real solution.

We also aimed for very high quality with the craft. We were very particular about getting a music director who could work with the audio because it was an audio-based idea.

RQ: We learnt that it's not important to have brand colours all the time, or a brand plastered everywhere. If it's an insightful idea, the brand doesn't need to be at the forefront.

[AUDIO NIKAHNAMA](#)

AUDIO NIKAHNAMA | EASYPAISA



IMPACT BBDO, DUBAI

GOLD LYNX, GLASS: THE AWARD FOR CHANGE

“If it's an insightful idea, the brand doesn't need to be at the forefront”



Emphasise emotion

Many awarded brands anchored work in emotions – both positive and negative.

Coffee chain Boon linked its exploratory spirit to the UAE's space programme, targeting regional pride. [‘Space Beans’](#), by Grey, Dubai, generated a PR value of more than \$85,000 and netted the Print & Publishing Grand Prix.

Other winners achieved results by provoking a reaction. In the case of the Saudi Tourism Authority, widespread outrage led to a 33% year-on-year increase in visits to Saudi Arabia thanks to a strategic play. It leveraged the country's reputation among footballers as a coveted destination, inviting Lionel

Messi on a promotional trip. As the trip was during the transfer window, speculation mounted about Messi moving to Saudi Arabia, supported by images of the player and his family enjoying the country, showing the country off at its best. [‘Unauthorized Trip’](#), by J and us, Dubai, took the Entertainment Grand Prix.

SPACE BEANS | BOON



GREY, DUBAI

GRAND PRIX, PRINT & PUBLISHING LYNX



In action: Emphasise emotion

Play on pride

Pride was a recurrent theme in winning and shortlisted work. When local rules in Saudi Arabia limited displays of patriotism, American car brand Cadillac hosted a National Day parade within video game Forza Horizon 5. Winner of Bronze in Social & Influencer and Entertainment, [‘Maseerat Cadillac’](#), by Saatchi & Saatchi ME, Dubai, reached 18.6 million people. Another auto brand, Jeep, tapped into people’s pride in their customised cars. [‘Original Copies’](#), by Publicis Middle East, Dubai, used co-created content to increase sales by 59% and won Silver in Brand Experience & Activation. Meanwhile, [‘Superstar Ravi’](#), by Havas Middle East, Dubai, turned an adidas sneaker into a celebration of a small community restaurant in Dubai. Online stocks sold out in 15 minutes, and it scooped the Grand Prix in Creative Strategy.

Find your funny bone

Awarded work imbued storytelling with comedy. Lipton grew black tea sales by 40% in Egypt, despite a price hike, thanks to [‘Lipton - Ditch the Glitch’](#). The Gold Film winner, by DDB Egypt, Cairo, used a playful jingle to claim the post-Iftar food coma. A sassy snowman was the star of [‘Don’t Let Your Winter Break Become a Nightmare’](#). This satirical spot by travel booking app Wego and M&C Saatchi, Dubai, garnered 2.5m YouTube views and won Gold in Film Craft. And [‘Madinet Masr - Toubia - Things You Do For Debt’](#) put megastar Ahmed Fahmy in compromising situations to illustrate the lengths people go to to pay off their debts. From retail estate agent Madinet Masr and Impact BBDO, Cairo, it won Silver in Entertainment.

Spark intrigue

Successful brands showed how to convert curiosity into PR. Viewing platform Asharq Discovery promoted its new true crime series with a mysterious overnight media attack. [‘Ransom Billboards’](#), by SRMG Labs, Riyadh, reached 495 million people worldwide and won Silver in Brand Experience & Activation. Three hundred vehicles bearing empty licence plates sparked speculation in the UAE, raising \$43.8m to combat hunger. [‘Empty Plates’](#), by Saatchi & Saatchi ME, Dubai, won Bronze in Creative Effectiveness. And Chinese car brand Geely made a name for itself in the UAE by withholding the name of its vehicle. People were invited to guess the brand and test-drive the car without bias, leading to a 54% rise in sales. [‘Nameless Car’](#), by Geely and Spark Foundry, Dubai, was shortlisted in Outdoor.

DON'T LET YOUR WINTER BREAK BECOME A NIGHTMARE | WEGO



M&C SAATCHI, DUBAI

GOLD, FILM CRAFT LYNX



Dubai Lynx 2024

The rankings





Network of the Year: Leo Burnett

Leo Burnett, the company behind quadruple Grand Prix winner [‘ProtecTasbih’](#), was crowned Network of the Year. Another of its winning pieces, [‘The Protective Rhymes’](#), used nursery rhymes to educate children about consent, body safety, boundaries and quick responses to perilous situations. It took the Healthcare Grand Prix.

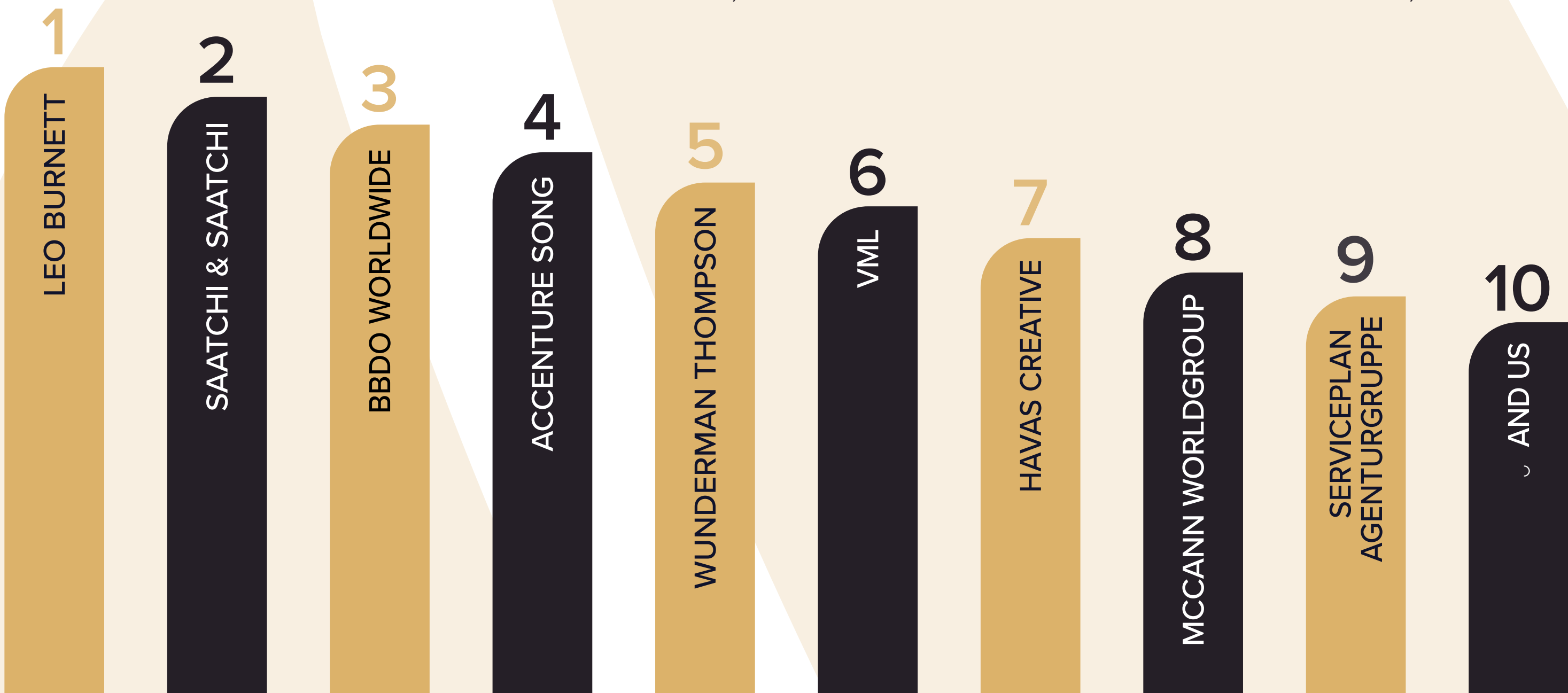
In second place came **Saatchi & Saatchi**. It was responsible for two pieces awarded in Creative Effectiveness: Gold winner [‘Time to Read’](#) and Bronze winner [‘Empty Plates’](#).

BBDO Worldwide took the third spot. Alongside [‘Audio Nikahnama’](#) for Pakistani fintech company easypaisa that took five Lynx Awards, the network’s [‘Child Wedding Cards’](#) work for UN Women won three Lynx Awards, including Gold in Media. This direct mail campaign rallied lawmakers to raise the legal age of marriage in Pakistan.

“Our work is all about working in an integrated and ‘Power of One’ manner across disciplines and agencies. We use the power of those diverse skills and expertise to answer our brands’ needs and craft ideas that make an impact.”

Tahaab Rais

Chief Strategy Officer, Publicis Groupe Middle East and Turkey



THE PROTECTIVE RHYMES | ANGHAMI



LEO BURNETT, DUBAI

GRAND PRIX, HEALTHCARE LYNX



Agency of the Year: Leo Burnett, Dubai

Leo Burnett, Dubai, won Agency of the Year. Its Grand Prix wins included [‘The Hidden Room’](#) from furniture retailer Home Box (Creative Effectiveness) and [‘Magroo - The First Arabic Dyslexic Font’](#) for telco Omantel (Industry Craft). Another piece for Omantel, [‘WhatsApp Oman’](#), took Gold in PR and Brand Experience & Activation.

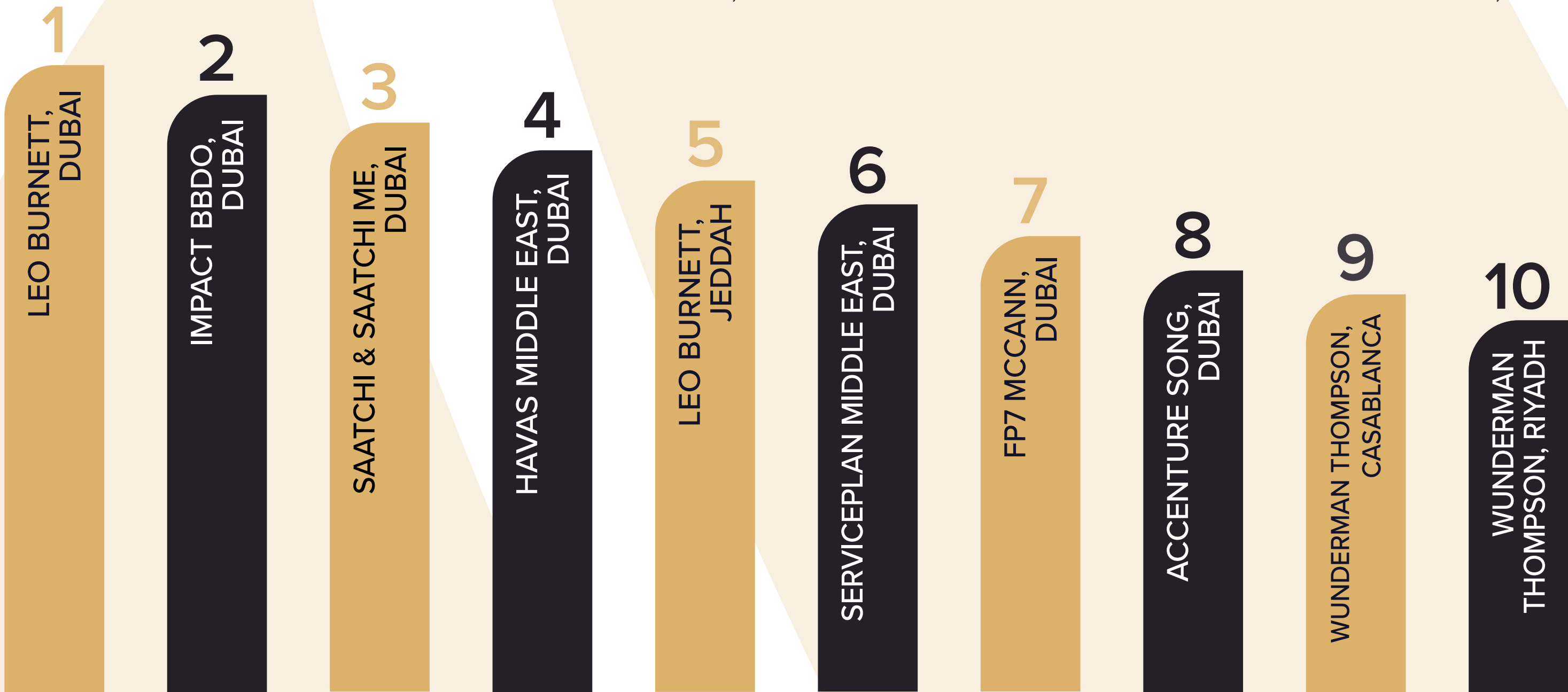
Impact BBDO, Dubai, took the second spot. Its winning work included an official name change, [‘ClimateChangeTown.pk’](#), to help the Government of Sindh raise funds for people struck by floods. It won Gold in Direct and in Creative Commerce.

Saatchi & Saatchi ME, Dubai, came in third place. Among its wins was [‘Lunar Treats’](#), Oreo’s teaching tool for young Ramadan fasters. It took Silver in both Digital and Direct.

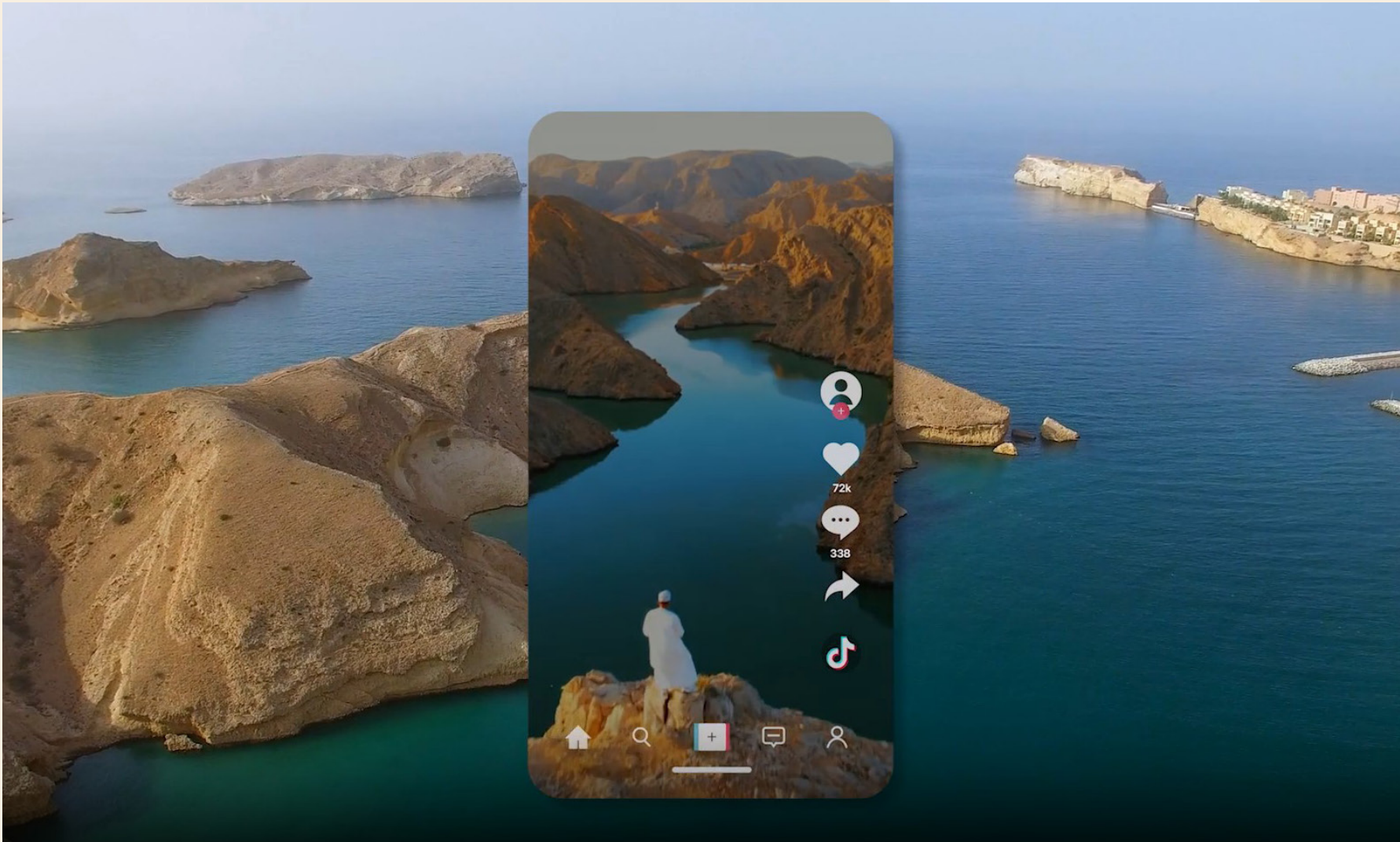
Behind every award win is a small army of incredible talents who are among the best in the industry. Partner this with a brave client who believes that creativity can change human behaviour and you have a beautiful recipe for award-winning work.

Bassel Kakish

Chief Executive Officer, Publicis Groupe Middle East and Turkey



WHATSAPP OMAN | OMANTEL



LEO BURNETT, DUBAI

GOLD, PR LYNX



Media Network of the Year: Initiative

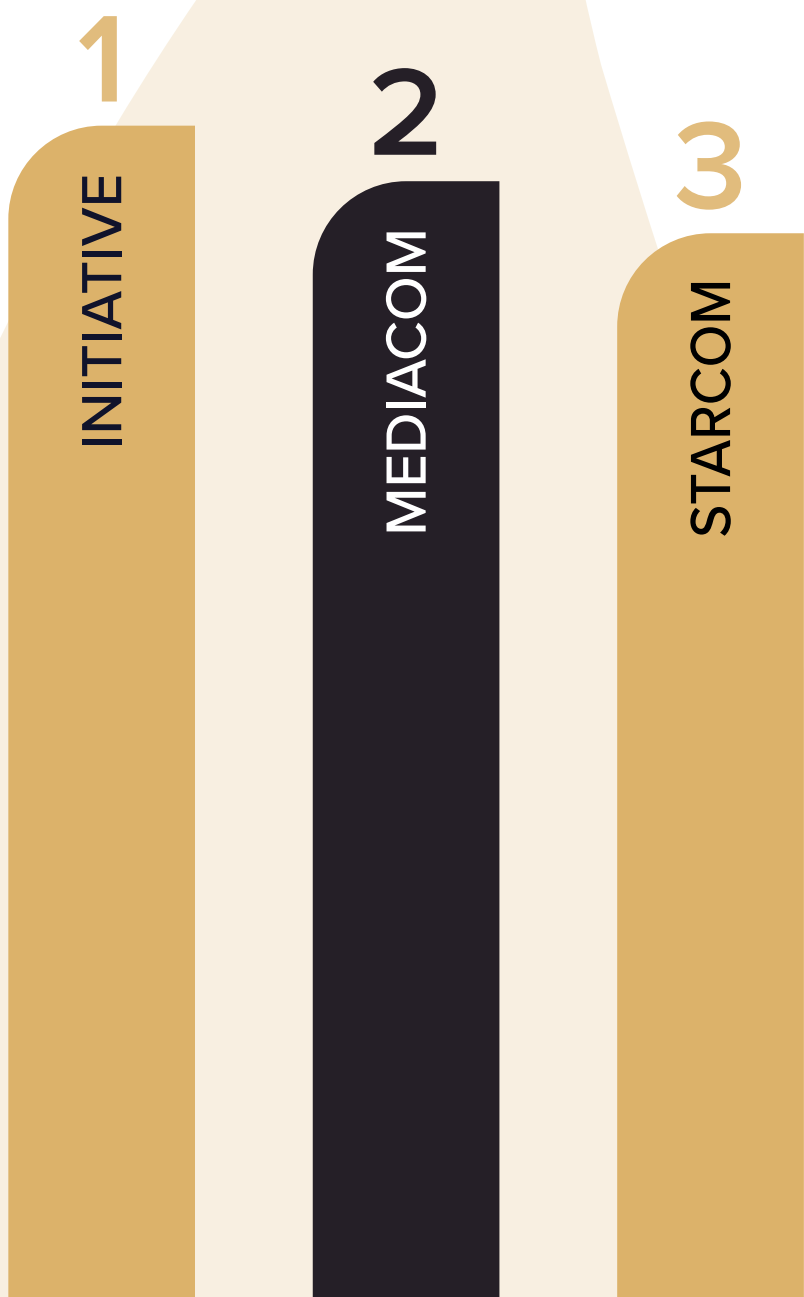
Initiative won Media Network of the Year, following its work on Media Grand Prix winner [‘Frequencies of Peace’](#) for kids’ clothing retailer Babyshop. This used radio and loudspeakers to reach millions of children in Syria.

In second place came **MediaCom**. It worked on Bronze Media winner [‘I See Coke’](#), which gamified on-screen product placements with the help of virtual assistant Alexa. It increased Coca-Cola’s brand awareness by 236%.

Starcom took the third spot. It won Bronze in Media for [‘Audio Nikahnama’](#), a piece that saw fintech company easypaisa use audio to help women understand their marriage contracts.

“This award is a testament to the creatively impactful client solutions we pride ourselves on, and our relentless commitment to driving business results and growth for our partners.”

Lara Arbid
CEO, Initiative



FREQUENCIES OF PEACE | BABYSHOP



FP7 MCCANN, DUBAI

GRAND PRIX, MEDIA LYNX



Independent Agency of the Year: Serviceplan Middle East, Dubai

Serviceplan Middle East, Dubai, took the top spot this year. Its work for two auto brands was among its wins. It took three Golds for ['BMW iJack'](#). It also won a Bronze for ['ALJ Toyota - The Donut Factory'](#), a cheeky multichannel campaign that gave production delays a positive spin.

In second place came **Land us, Dubai**, whose work for the Saudi Tourism Authority, ['Unauthorized Trip'](#), took three Awards, including the Entertainment Grand Prix. It also earned a Silver in Direct for ['The Last Steel of Azovstal'](#), a fundraising campaign for Ukraine.

BigTime Creative Shop, Riyadh, was in third place. It took four Awards, two of them for ['A Tale as Old as Time'](#) – a cinematic film showcasing the gravity of a boxing match between undefeated champions Tyson Fury and Oleksandr Usyk.

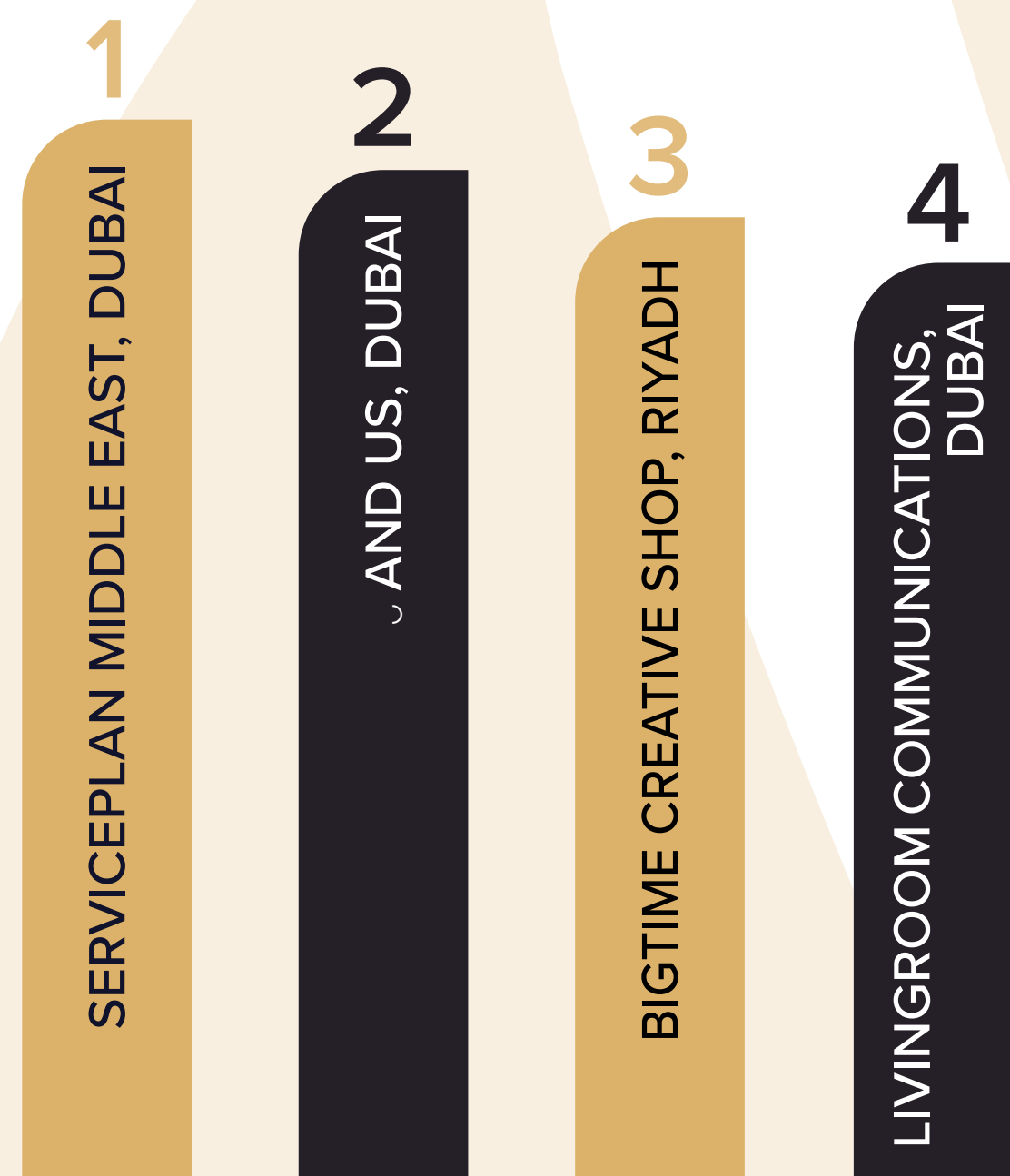
“Our success is closely tethered to solving real client challenges that serve as the perfect launchpad for that creative leap. Our collaborative approach across work streams fosters a culture of trust and ownership.”

Akhilesh Bagri

Chief Creative Officer, Serviceplan Middle East

Natalie Shardan

Managing Partner, Serviceplan Middle East



ALJ TOYOTA | THE DONUT FACTORY | TOYOTA



SERVICEPLAN MIDDLE EAST, DUBAI

BRONZE, SOCIAL & INFLUENCER



Dubai Golden Palm: Good People Films, Egypt

The Dubai Golden Palm for 2024 went to **Good People Films, Egypt**. Among its wins was [‘Lipton - Ditch the Glitch’](#), which leveraged a Ramadan tradition through a catchy tune inspired by Lipton’s name. Made with DDB Egypt, it took Gold in Film.

In second place came **Prodigious, UAE**. [‘The Creature’](#) – its work with Leo Burnett, Dubai – showed the emotional journey children go through when a parent remarries. It took Gold in Film and Bronze in Film Craft.

Finally, **Dejavu, UAE**, took third place. It worked with Leo Burnett, Jeddah, on [‘ProtecTasbih’](#) – an innovative solution to the problem of pilgrimage-induced respiratory infections.

"You take a handful of good people. These good men and women attract more good people (while simultaneously discouraging a-holes). More good people show up. And this attracts even more good people. Suddenly you’re surrounded by people who are real good at everything. And there’s a tipping point. Good magically becomes great. And that’s how great happens.

We call this the law of ‘good people’.”

Iman Abu Sharkh

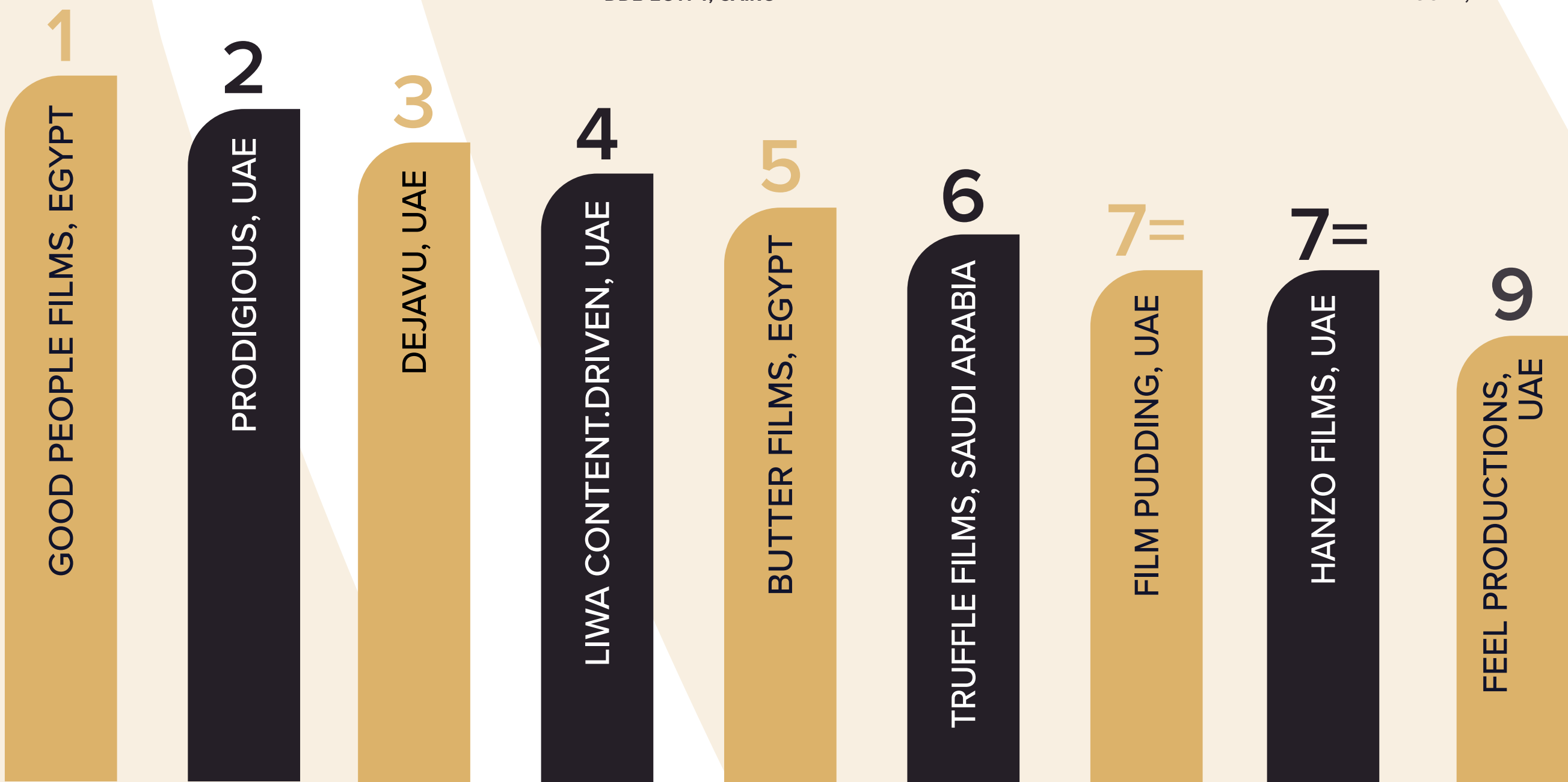
Head of Production, Good People Films

LIPTON - DITCH THE GLITCH | LIPTON TEA



DDB EGYPT, CAIRO

GOLD, FILM LYNX





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