

## Old Spice and Dikembe Mutombo Save the World in 4 1/2 Weeks with Real-Time Digital Video Game

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Citizen Paine and Old Spice and Wieden+Kennedy, Jan 1, 2013

**Summary:** 2013 Silver Anvil Award Winner — Events and Observances (More Than Seven Days) — Business Products

While the Mayans predicted the world would end on December 21, 2012, they didn't forecast Old Spice – a brand with a history of hugely successful digital campaigns – would create a digital video game to keep this from happening. Citizen Paine with Old Spice and Wieden+Kennedy *developed and executed a globe-saving marketing/communications strategy to drive excitement, press coverage and consumer engagement/participation* for "Dikembe Mutombo's 4 1/2 Weeks to Save the World." The result? *450+ million impressions from 260+ placements, and 6+ million game plays*, helping save the planet so guys across the universe could continue enjoying Old Spice's superior grooming products.

Events and observances (more than seven days) includes programs or events that take place for longer than a one-week period, such as a yearlong anniversary, or activities (commemorations, observances, celebrations, etc.).

### Full Text: **SITUATION ANALYSIS**

It all started in 3114 BC when the Mayans predicted that the world would end on December 21, 2012. What the Mayans didn't forecast was that a popular men's grooming brand with a history of executing hugely successful digital campaigns would create an 8-bit online video game to keep this from happening. In November 2012, in its mission to save the world and drive awareness for the brand's Champion grooming lineup, Old Spice released "Dikembe Mutombo's 4 1/2 Weeks to Save the World," a real-time, embeddable digital video game featuring NBA legend Dikembe Mutombo. Each week, Old Spice debuted a new level incorporating current, news-making events that could be considered by some as a sign that the end of the world was coming (i.e., Hostess bankruptcy, Gangnam Style dance craze, etc.). As one of the greatest defenders of all time, Dikembe joined forces with Old Spice to save the planet from its impending doom on December 21, 2012, in accordance with the Mayan Calendar. With the world set to expire in a matter of weeks, Citizen Paine in collaboration with advertising agency Wieden+Kennedy developed and executed a marketing/communications strategy intended to drive excitement, consumer engagement/participation and press coverage for "Dikembe Mutombo's 4 1/2 Weeks to Save the World." The result? As you're well aware, the world was saved and guys across the universe are able to continue enjoying Old Spice's superior grooming products.

### **RESEARCH**

The PR team identified the following **challenges**, including:

1. Examining potential cultural sensitivities with the Mayan Calendar prophecy;
2. Keeping the story fresh over the duration of the campaign; and
3. Securing Old Spice Champion product mentions as opposed to press coverage focused

primarily on the brand's marketing cool factor.

With Old Spice's challenges in mind, the team executed the following **research** to determine the best strategic approach:

- Executed media audit and consulted our global agency partners in Latin America to review PR risks associated with Mayan Calendar-inspired program.
- Studied past online video game launches, as well as other interactive digital executions, to evaluate, identify and apply key success elements.
- Conducted spokesperson backgrounder of Dikembe to determine news value with key media targets.
- Researched popularity of casual gaming (online vs. console based), especially among Old Spice's target guy audience.
- Investigated fame/media and consumer draw of Old Spice video game designer Adam Atomic.
- Identified newsworthy pop-culture moments to leverage during all phases of game development.
- Developed a program-specific "watch-outs" document based on existing P&G/Old Spice social guidelines.

## **PLANNING**

The team's **objectives** were:

- Generate word-of-mouth and national editorial coverage at launch to drive conversation and awareness prior to the start of Old Spice's media buy.
- Leverage the uniqueness of Old Spice's online video game to connect the brand with a broad group of media and consumer audiences, specifically sports and video game enthusiasts.
- Deliver 150+ million positive media impressions for Old Spice and its Champion scent lineup over the duration of the month-long campaign.

Due to the extremely fast-paced nature of this campaign and the real-time inclusion of storylines that corresponded with real-world events, planning was done thoughtfully, but quickly. Multiple stakeholders were on the phone daily to review storyline ideas from the team's ongoing research of news and pop-culture websites, as well as to make immediate decisions on all other facets of the video game. Most importantly, we wanted to make sure all topics aligned with Old Spice's tone and brand character.

To achieve our aggressive objectives, the team created the following **strategies**:

- Develop a phased approach to drive media/consumer awareness at launch (two weeks before Old Spice's paid media buy started) and sustain engagement over the duration of the digital execution.
- Capitalize on the "real-time" nature of the video game's storylines, cast of digital characters for each level and news cycle surrounding the Mayan Calendar and supposed end of the world.
- Treat the video game creative as an entertainment property rather than a pure-play online activation – offering exclusive level previews and creative assets to influential media/bloggers.
- Fully utilize the PR availability of Dikembe to further capitalize on his popularity with sports and men's lifestyle media.
- Create additional consumer call-to-action and media pulse point with NYC moment-in-time event.
- Develop and push PR messaging to ensure Old Spice Champion is featured in editorial write-ups.

**Target/Audience:**

Our primary target audience consisted of the following:

- Consumer: Men ages 18-24, including sports, gaming, digital and tech aficionados.
- Media: National broadcast, print and online media and high-profile bloggers, including men's interest, sports, gaming, entertainment, tech and trade outlets.

## **EXECUTION**

### **Phase 1: Video Game Debut**

- Conducted aggressive outreach to generate excitement and earned media coverage for the game prior to the start of Old Spice's media buy.
- Deployed launch messages to key media outlets where Old Spice's target guy lives, including sports, gaming, men's interest, lifestyle and pop-culture.
- Distributed targeted pitches to outlets based on each level's storylines (provided weekly updates to press).
- Recorded custom audio messages from Dikembe for top-tier media to entice them to play the game and help Old Spice save the world.
- Shared creative assets with media/bloggers, including a video game trailer, fact sheet, screen grabs, etc.
- Targeted social influencers, including fans/followers of Old Spice and video game/sports enthusiasts.
- Coordinated blogger/media giveaways with custom "Save the World" gameplay packs – Champion deodorant, Old Spice mousepads, foam finger, etc.

### **Phase 2: NYC Media Tour with Dikembe Mutombo**

- Conducted four (4) hours of in-studio appearances with Dikembe and national sports media, including FoxSports.com, ESPN.com and NBATV, etc.
- Coordinated two (2) hour media event/photo opportunity at Dave & Buster's in NYC, where media we're invited to play the game and interview Dikembe.
- Enlisted target-appropriate celebrity Stacy Keibler to join Dikembe at Dave & Buster's in his quest to "Save the World," allowing us to bring the news of the game to a new audience – entertainment and lifestyle press.
- Activated Old Spice and Stacy's social channels with Tweets to fans/followers to encourage gameplay.
- Leveraged photos/b-roll footage from the event to secure additional media placements.
- Distributed Champion product during the media tour to drive trial among key press/influencers.

### **Phase 3: Sustaining Awareness/Engagement**

- Sustained media coverage/buzz via continued outreach efforts leading up to the supposed "end of the world" date on December 21.
- Kept the conversation going by leveraging the "real-time" nature and pop-culture storylines of the game.

### **< strong>Phase 4: Old Spice Saves the World Celebration**

- Engaged media with a humorous "Old Spice Saves the World" celebration video, featuring Dikembe and the other characters from the game.
- Worked closely with Wieden+Kennedy to uncover campaign success metrics to tell the larger story of the video game's success.

## **EVALUATION**

***Generated significant word-of-mouth and editorial coverage at launch, resulting in a flurry of positive editorial placements and gameplays prior to the start of Old Spice's***

**digital media buy.**

- In the first two weeks, *the PR team secured 60+ editorial placements (with positive media sentiment) and 107 million impressions* from national outlets, such as ESPN.com, Grantland.com, Slate.com, SI.com, MTVGuyCode.com and Gizmodo.com.
- Overall, the video game generated *6+ million game starts (nearly 2 million in the first two weeks) from 1.6 million unique players.*

**Secured numerous positive brand and Champion product endorsements with influential media that resonate directly with Old Spice's target guy.**

"Now, thanks to an 8-bit video game from Old Spice, Mutombo's fingers are flying once again – and this time they're saving the planet. Will we get any work done the rest of the day? \*Finger wave\*"

– *Katie Linendoll, ESPN.com*

"Old Spice has been killing it for a while with its hilarious ad campaigns, but this just takes the cake, blows out the candle and eats it ... now this is some effective marketing."

– *Michael Rougeau, Complex Gaming*

"Dikembe Mutombo's 4 ½ Weeks amazed players with a new mini game to master each week ... a fine example of branded games done right."

– *Joe Osborne, Games.com*

**Surpassed goal of 150+ million positive media impressions with consistent stream of press coverage focused on promoting the Old Spice brand and its Champion scent lineup over the duration of the one-month campaign.**

In just a little over a month, the campaign generated *more than 260 placements, producing more than 450 million impressions in outlets such as* ESPN.com, *Sports Illustrated, USA Today.com, The Huffington Post, Yahoo! News, MSN Wonderwall, US Weekly, WSJ.com, E! Online* and many more.

The media event at Dave & Buster's in NYC netted nearly *20 media interviews* with outlets such as ESPN.com, SI.com, NBATV, Yahoo!Shine, *US Weekly, OK! Weekly, Allure, Celebuzz.com, NY Daily News*, etc. In addition, we had a tremendous turnout from all of the major photo agencies, including *Getty Images, WireImage, WENN and 10 others.*