

**D&AD Creativity Works 2008**

**Cadbury 'Gorilla'**

**Chris Willingham (account handler, Fallon London)**

**Lee Rolston (director of marketing for block chocolate and beverages, Cadbury)**

**'If at first, the idea is not absurd, then there is no hope for it.'**

***Albert Einstein***

Cadbury Dairy Milk has been around for over a century and is nothing short of a national treasure, enjoyed by young and old alike. But no brand, no matter how popular, comfortable or comforting, can ever afford to stand still. 'We sensed from all the research we were doing that, although people were still talking about their love for Dairy Milk, it felt a bit passive,' explains Lee Rolston, Cadbury's director of marketing for block chocolate and beverages. 'It's a bit like the comfy sweater you keep at the back of the wardrobe that you'll never throw out but you start wearing less and less.' Keen to reinvigorate the brand, Cadbury approached Fallon London in March 2007 with a clear, concise brief: 'Get the love back'.

'We chose to work with Fallon because what they are great at is igniting an emotional connection with brands in a vivid, expansive and creative way and we really felt that was absolutely the kind of people we wanted to work with,' says Rolston. Fallon's response to the brief was that the communications should feel as good as eating the product itself. This immediately shifted the focus from the somewhat formulaic approach that had characterised previous Dairy Milk campaigns to an altogether more emotional one. Rather than being seen as simply manufacturers of chocolate, Fallon's concept repositioned Cadbury in terms of the end benefit of the product as 'producers of happiness'.

The campaign was due to go to air just two months later in May 2007 (this date was later pushed to August) and Fallon was given just one week to come up with a concept. 'Obviously, we jump at those opportunities, so we put a couple of

creative teams, plus Juan Cabral, on the brief,' recalls Chris Willingham, account handler for Fallon London. The teams came up with three ideas but just one clear recommendation: 'Glass and a Half Full Productions'.

Arriving at Glass and a Half Full Productions as an umbrella concept for the brand was very much part of a brainstorming session – but how was the leap made to a gorilla playing drums to the sounds of Phil Collins? It simply can't be explained, according to Willingham. 'There's only so much method in the process and you then hand it on to fantastic creative minds – and that's where Juan came in. It was one of those moments when you sit and look at each other as the script is being read, thinking, "Is he mad?"' Willingham is the first to admit that it took the team at Fallon a little while to recognise the brilliance of the Gorilla concept. 'I think we had a pragmatic concern that it was just too far for Cadbury to go from where they were at that point; that there had to be some sort of stepping stone. But then we thought, "You know what? This is an opportunity – we've got a week, we should do what we feel is right rather than what we think they will think is right."'

As it turned out, both Rolston and Phil Rumbol, marketing director for Cadbury UK, loved the idea. 'We were as close to punching the air as you can be,' recalls Rolston. 'It was an idea that, at script stage, you felt rather than thought – but you just couldn't help but listen to the feeling. It wasn't just the execution but the thought of a holding production company becoming a place where smiles are made, which we thought was a stroke of genius.'

What was fantastic – and unusual – about this project was the fact that Cabral's initial script was almost exactly what was made. 'The details and the nuances that you see in the final execution were in the original script,' says Rolston. 'There were a few technical differences in terms of how it was shot but as a feeling and a piece of film it's as pure as it could be versus the original script that we saw that day.'

One of the reasons for this was the level of detail Cabral had included in his initial script. The concept was presented more as a treatment than a script and it was this level of detail, plus the fact that Cabral already knew exactly the music

track he wanted to use, that really helped to sell the idea to Cadbury on the day. 'We presented two other very good ideas, both of which had chocolate at the heart of them, albeit in a slightly abstract way, and then there was Gorilla, which we presented last, and which was the real leftfield one,' continues Willingham. 'We expected them to be completely nonplussed but, to their credit, their faces lit up when we read the script and played the music.'

But it wasn't just a case of selling the idea to Rumbol and Rolston. They then had to sell it up through Cadbury, which was not easy, as this is a reasonably conservative company. As a flagship product that accounts for more than 50% of sales, Dairy Milk encapsulates the brand. While there was a definite sense that it was time to move forwards, to move this far, this was a very big ask and took some convincing – not to mention four rounds of research. 'We had to do an awful lot of research to convince everyone that this was the right idea at the right time. As it turned out, we didn't go to air in May because we needed to be sure that this was the right thing to do,' says Willingham. Although the ad was made in April and could have aired in May, as originally planned, the team decided to sit tight a little longer and research it through the summer. This was a huge step for Cadbury and, with only one chance to get it right, not one to be taken lightly. But, if the creative team learned one thing, it was never to give up on a good idea. 'There were several stages when it looked like it wasn't going to make it to air and it is a credit to Cadbury and to Lee and Phil that it did,' continues Willingham. 'They fought and risked their jobs for it, I think it would be fair to say. And I think we all believed in it enough to take those risks.'

For Rolston, the challenge lay in the fact that the idea diverged utterly from category conventions. There was no chocolate in the ad. There were no people demonstrating their experience of the product. 'We felt that the time was right for the brand to not tell people that it made you feel good – but to elicit that feeling. It was a challenge, but more and more the power of the creative won through, and in the pre-testing that we did, while it didn't make much sense, it certainly elicited the feeling we were looking for and came through as incredibly powerful.'

What Cadbury bought into was much more than a single execution, however. The company embraced the much larger idea of Glass and a Half Full Productions: an ongoing concept that could embrace anything that is as enjoyable as eating the chocolate in any media. The relationship between client and creative may have been in its infancy, but the limited time frame of just one week from Cadbury's call to Fallon presenting its ideas was helpful in many ways. 'I think that galvanised everyone, including the client,' remembers Willingham. 'There was a sense that we were doing something together at high speed that was against the odds and I think that created an immediate sense of togetherness and partnership.' The relationship with Cadbury was then and remains extremely good. 'Relationships with clients tend to be great when you've got a big idea that everyone buys into and has a lot of depth, and Glass and a Half Full Productions has that.'

Rolston adds: 'In terms of our background we like to be involved in the creative process and I think Fallon were quite accommodating of that. I think it was one of those examples where the picture had been painted so vividly at the brief stage that we were confident that we both had exactly the same vision in terms of what we wanted to deliver.'

Gorilla was Juan Cabral's vision in every sense of the word, so it made sense that it should also be his directorial debut. Cabral preferred to work on his own, rather than as one half of the traditional twosome of copywriter and art director. This was another big step – undoubtedly the right one. It not only saved time and money but, more importantly, it guaranteed Cabral's pure vision of how Gorilla should be brought to life.

In terms of the practicalities of shooting the ad, there were a number of obstacles to overcome, not least Cabral's absolute insistence on getting the very best gorilla suit in the world. The perfect suit was eventually tracked down in Los Angeles. It was the very suit used in Hollywood blockbusters such as *Gorillas In The Mist* and *Congo* and it came with no fewer than three operators – one inside the suit and two to operate it remotely. Negotiating for these three people to pause their current projects and fly to London for the shoot was a feat in itself. Next came the task of teaching the person in the gorilla suit to play the drums convincingly;

he had never touched a drum before. Thankfully he did play the guitar and thus wasn't a complete musical novice. The unbearable heat inside the gorilla suit meant shooting was limited to only a couple of minutes at a time, before the operator would emerge, drenched in sweat, to be fanned down and rehydrated for the next session. Securing the music, however, was uncharacteristically straightforward. Music negotiations are notoriously difficult, but getting Phil Collins to buy into the idea proved surprisingly easy – and benefited the artist tremendously. Once the ad broke, both the featured track and Collins' Greatest Hits album rocketed back into the charts.

Despite the shoot's slow progress, this wasn't an especially expensive production. The shoot took place over two days and, aside from buying the music, the biggest cost was getting the suit and its three operatives over from LA and making sure it worked perfectly. The ad even came in on budget, another plaudit for the project.

The team also made the brave decision to make only a 90-second version of Gorilla. They felt that, in order to do the concept full justice, the level of anticipation needed to build. Viewers needed to empathise with the gorilla, something that could not be fully achieved with either a 30- or 60-second slot. Ninety seconds was the ideal length so they convinced the client, who then briefed media company Starcom, only to buy 90-second slots. Starcom came back with a schedule that was very low in terms of the actual number of spots. However, these were all peak-time, prestigious shows: the Rugby World Cup and the Big Brother final, to name just two. 'Although they were low in quantity, because we cherry-picked the spots we were able to achieve fame on television, and then frequency came virally and through YouTube,' says Willingham. 'There was a scarcity about it so when it did come on it was a real event.'

The launch of Gorilla was even advertised in newspapers and online. The notion of advertising an ad may seem strange and is still a rarity in the industry; however, Fallon had learned from its past award-winning Sony Bravia campaigns, as Willingham points out. 'If it's good enough, then why shouldn't you treat it in the same way and launch it as you would a film or a TV programme?' And it was certainly good enough. Posting on YouTube started on the night of the

Big Brother final and by the following day there had been some 100,000 hits. That figure has now topped 12 million. Then the spoofs started. To date, more than 300 spoof versions of Gorilla have been posted online: a clear demonstration of the lengths people are prepared to go to for a piece of advertising. 'Gorilla broke the mould in many respects and is still getting hits on YouTube a year later, so it's lived way beyond the conventional television advertising campaign,' notes Willingham. This viral potency has given Gorilla an enormous extra impact; predominantly free media. 'It's an excellent model – to spend money on the production of something great, to showcase it in a small number of top spots on TV and then wait for the viral effect to really deliver the full impact,' observes Willingham.

The team followed up the initial Gorilla ad with the Airport Trucks campaign, but the demand for Gorilla was so great that he had to be brought back. 'We wanted to give it a new twist so we've taken Bonnie Tyler's Total Eclipse Of The Heart and used that instead of Phil Collins, which gives it a freshness rather than just replaying the old version,' says Willingham. 'We've also been buying three minutes of airtime and running the new Gorilla back-to-back with a different version of Trucks to what I think, with hindsight, was probably the ideal soundtrack – Bon Jovi's Living On A Prayer.'

The success of the campaign can be seen way beyond its on-screen success. 'In the short term we saw a rise of about 9% and certainly as we've aired it again, and its successor Trucks, we have seen a gradual, consistent build in sales of the brand,' says Rolston. 'We have also seen a real turnaround in terms of brand preference, so there has been a really positive commercial aspect to this as well as a positive brand response.'

Gorilla was a complete and unique piece of film, so its success was initially hard to assess, according to Rolston. But now that understanding will inform more of Cadbury's future campaigns. 'We've learnt about the power of irrational creativity. Sometimes you can't rationalise why something works or what people take from it. It just feels like the right thing to do and, as a wider business, we've realised how powerful that can be. And, as a business, we've gained a real positive confidence on the back of Gorilla.'

As for the future, the relationship between Fallon London and Cadbury continues apace, with a number of new ideas already in development for early next year across a range of media. 'Everyone believes in it and when you've got that shared belief in something, I think the relationship tends to be very strong,' concludes Willingham. 'There's a lot of trust in us, having succeeded with Gorilla, to make this idea sing again.'