D&AD New Blood Awards

Brief set by
Penguin

In collaboration with
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Fire up Gen Z fandom through Penguin merchandise

Deadline
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The backstory

Penguin make books for everyone, because a book can change anyone. In 1935, Penguin founder Allen Lane introduced the paperback – revolutionising the book market by making reading affordable and a part of everyday conversation.

Penguin are a modern entertainment brand, relevant to audiences old and new. However, as a heritage brand, new, younger audiences don't necessarily see themselves reflected in Penguin's visual identity. Despite plenty of offerings for a Gen Z market, including online communities and thriving social channels, the visual representation of Penguin's identity has yet to catch up with their other innovations.

Everyone **thinks** they know the Penguin identity. The tri-band design is a Penguin staple, and almost all Penguin merchandise, from notebooks to tote bags, bears this original 1930s style. But how can Penguin reinvent their merchandise to appeal to the next generation, who don't have the same nostalgia for the brand as the generation before?

What's the challenge?

Develop a new merchandise identity for Penguin, to appeal to Gen Z readers.

Give examples of at least 3 different merchandise products, and showcase a coherent brand identity that speaks to who Penguin are now and what Gen Z want to see.

The kind of merchandise is up to you (anything except food or clothing). But no matter what form, it should exist to enhance the reading experience in some way. For example, traditional products have been notebooks to jot down quotes, cushions to sit on as you read, bags to carry your books in, even chairs to relax in... And whatever you pick should be relevant to your audience.

Who are we talking to?

Under 25s (known as 'Gen Z') with a passion for books. When they aren't reading, you can find them scrolling through #BookTok searching for recommendations for what to read next. They like to feel connected to a wider community and share their reading experience with like-minded souls.

Things to think about

Stay Penguin
You don't need to stick to Penguin's current branding guidelines, but you should use their brand mission ('We make books for everyone, because a book can change anyone') to guide your response. This isn't about changing who Penguin already are as a brand (make sure you do your research to find out more), but instead reimagining how this is expressed visually to a new audience.

Look at how Penguin have evolved over the years – how can you articulate where they began versus where they are now?

Keep it Gen Z
Penguin already have a large range of items to appeal to older readers. These consumers have a sense of nostalgia for the brand – their parents and grandparents will have been brought up on the tri-band Penguin identity. Gen Z will likely not have that same nostalgia. How can you help them to relate to Penguin with your new design?

Also think about what Gen Z want from their products. There's no limit on the scale of production, so consider the types of products this audience prefer to own (limited editions, bespoke products, locally made). Sustainability is key to both this audience and Penguin as a brand, so avoid throwaway culture.

Things to avoid
Don't simply rehash existing merchandise graphics, don't create a false narrative about or reimagine Penguin's past, and don't just retrofit modern titles onto Penguin's 1930's identity.

Don't include book cover designs or change / redesign the Penguin logo.

You can choose the kind of merchandise, with two exceptions: Penguin don't want to see designs for food or clothing.

The important stuff

Present:

- Your new merchandise designs and how you decided on your products, including how they relate to a Gen Z reading experience and why they will appeal.
- At least 3 examples of your merchandise designs across different products.

What and how to submit

Read ***Preparing your entries*** before you get started for full format guidelines.

Main (essential)**:**
Either a **presentation video** (max. 2 min) OR **JPEG slides** (max. 8), showing your solution. If submitting a **video**, you must also include supporting **JPEGs** (max. 4) to showcase your merchandise designs.

Optional (judges may view this if they wish)**:**
Interactive work (websites, apps, etc); if your main piece is **JPEGs**, you can also submit **video** (max. 1 min total).