

MULTICHANNEL

Omega plants seeds for legacy-building via social project in Brazil

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#OmegaVivaRio social charity effort

By JEN KING

Switzerland's Omega is gearing up to reprise its role as the official timekeeper of the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro through a social action countdown.

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With the summer Olympics about a year away, the watch brand's "Omega Viva Rio" campaign aims to start a conversation surrounding the games early on to keep the its role top of mind, but also highlight Omega's civic duties to city's young. Social responsibility is taken up by many brands, but by presenting its philanthropic efforts on a global scale, to an international audience, Omega's social projects may have more impact.

"The Olympics are on almost the same track as the American presidential elections, which are also a little over a year away," said Rob Frankel, branding expert at marketing consultancy firm [Frankel & Anderson](#), Los Angeles. "All Olympic sponsors need to be on board years ahead of the event so that they can piggyback on to the event's publicity smoothly.

"Additionally, countdowns are a reliable means of building anticipation, both positive and negative: dwindling down creates a sense of urgency every New Year's Eve and terrified

the world for Y2K," he said. "Counting 'up' also works, as outdoor boards that count 'how many cigarette deaths happened this year.'"

Mr. Frankel is not affiliated with Omega, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Omega was unable to respond directly by press deadline.

Countdown for change

Omega introduced Omega Viva Rio on social media as a "community countdown" that will include 12 social projects benefiting Rio de Janeiro over the course of 12 months, until the games begin in July 2016.

Omega hopes that the social impact will become the brand's legacy long after the games and its role as timekeeper have passed. It is also likely that through Omega's efforts, many of its affluent collectors and enthusiasts will pledge additional funds to the social efforts put forth by the brand.

To include its social network in the charities surrounding Omega Viva Rio, the watchmaker is encouraging its fans to upload an image of their hands making a heart shape with the hashtag #OmegaVivaRio. When uploaded and tagged, Omega will donate 16 cents to Viva Rio, a nonprofit promoting a "culture of peace" and social inclusion, to help Rio's young and their families.

Watch the video and share your heart using #OMEGAVIVARIO! Help OMEGA to make a difference for thousands of young lives in Rio de Janeiro. omegavivario.com

Posted by **OMEGA Watches** on **Monday, August 3, 2015**

On the Omega Viva Rio Web site, consumers can learn more about the 12 social projects underway in Rio. In introductory copy, Omega explains that "at the heart of it all [the Olympics] will be the people who give the city life" and that is why the brand is dedicated to giving back.

The Omega Viva Rio social action projects, in partnership with charity Viva Rio, will work to improve community spaces and education centers in Rio. Since children are the focus, Omega hopes that its efforts will "plant the seeds for a better future."

Only the first social action project has been unveiled as of press time. The first effort lends support to vulnerable mothers through the refurbishing of a specialized center for pregnant women and new moms.



Omega Viva Rio social action #1

Within the countdown, Omega's enthusiasts can learn more about each social action through clicking the appropriate box. For instance, for the vulnerable mother project, Omega shares insights into the neighborhood where the center is located, such as its low human development index and how Viva Rio has helped through training and group activities to better the babies' health.

Omega Viva Rio's countdown can be found [here](#).

Similarly, during the 2014 FIFA World Cup, also held in Rio de Janeiro, Swiss watchmaker Hublot enlisted local support to build a playground for children in the favela Jacarezinho.

The watchmaker invested substantial resources into the FIFA World Cup to become the official timekeeper, a position that afforded visibility during every game of the globally-watched tournament. To improve its image among Brazilian consumers, Hublot worked with a local community to turn a derelict lot into a playground ([see story](#)).

"It's just the same old 'corporate citizenship' saw that every PR department cranks out for its clients," Mr. Frankel said.

"The world has become so politically correct that mindless ivory tower executives think the lack of such programs will mark them as 'greedy capitalists,'" he said. "It's simply a cost of doing business these days."

Olympic hopefuls

For the winter Olympics held in Sochi, Russia last year, Omega also acted as the official timekeeper of the games.

To explain what this role entails to consumers, Omega developed a multichannel effort that illustrated the mechanics behind its timing devices and celebrated the spirit of the games. In addition to this, Omega created a 2,014-piece watch collection to mark the occasion ([see story](#)).

Omega is repeating this for the 2016 summer Olympics with the Seamaster Bullhead "Rio 2016" timepiece. The limited-edition timepiece, made in a series of only 316, was inspired by the colors of the Olympic rings: red, blue, green, black and yellow.

With colours inspired by the iconic Olympic rings, the OMEGA

Seamaster Bullhead "Rio 2016" is sure to set pulses racing. #1YearToGo
#Falta1Ano #Rio2016

Posted by **OMEGA Watches** on **Tuesday, August 4, 2015**

Producing timepieces as a souvenir from the games keeps the consumer's interested firmly rooted in Omega's true business.

"It makes sense if it's a limited collectible, especially if it's part of a series," Mr. Frankel said. "It gives them one more aspect of the brand to talk about beyond the sponsorship and it's much more on point than its social programs, which do nothing other than distract from the brand."

Final Take

Jen King, lead reporter on Luxury Daily, New York

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