

The missing ink

Stationery brand highlights women in history to promote its pens, scores social media praise

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Stabilo Boss is highlighting overlooked women of history (and its products) in a striking print and outdoor campaign.

The stationery company worked with **DDB Düsseldorf** on the **Highlighting The Remarkable** campaign.



The ads take historical images and then use one of Stabilo's highlighter pens to pick out women in the background who had their contributions minimised because of sexism.

One ad shows the Nasa control room during the Apollo 11 mission and picks Katherine Johnson - who served as a Nasa mathematician, calculating the trajectories of rockets and capsules - out of the background. Johnson was recently the subject of a Hollywood film, *Hidden Figures*.

The other women featured in the campaign are Lise Meitner, a physicist who helped discover nuclear fission but was never awarded a Nobel prize, and Edith Wilson, who assumed the role of US president Woodrow Wilson (her husband) after he had a stroke.

Highlight the remarkable Katherine Johnson.
The Nasa mathematician responsible for the calculations
resulting in Apollo 11's safe return to earth.



Results / The campaign initially ran in April, but after winning Gold and Silver Lions at Cannes, for Outdoor and Print, respectively, it was shared on social media and gained traction. According to DDB Germany's chief creative officer, Dennis May, the campaign attracted 10 million social impressions on Twitter within the space of a few days. As a result, the ads will continue to run in Germany through the summer.

INSIGHT /

Highlighting equality / The purpose of the Highlighting The Remarkable campaign was show to how society diminishes the achievements of women. It does this by taking historic moments and pointing out the vital but little-known roles that women played.

The agency described its work like this: 'Everyone knows the phrase "Behind every great man is a great woman." But what does it mean? That the man is always the hero and the woman his sidekick? The truth is, all too often women were upstaged, and their actions and successes not mentioned. 2018 is the year to rewrite history: with Stabilo Boss.'

The insight is intuitively true, but also backed up by figures where ever you care to look. For instance, only 17% of the biographies on Wikipedia are about women.

But the conversation around gender equality has been growing for years and social media has played a large role in that. Brands can benefit if they can add to the conversation in a way that is unexpected but welcome. The surge of retweets and mentions that the Stabilo campaign prompted demonstrates this appetite.

Stabilo's campaign not only presents a topical idea in an arresting manner, it also integrates the product into the execution. It is impossible to separate the message of the ads from the product and its purpose, raising the campaign above the tacked-on purposefulness we see from so many other brands desperate to join the conversation.