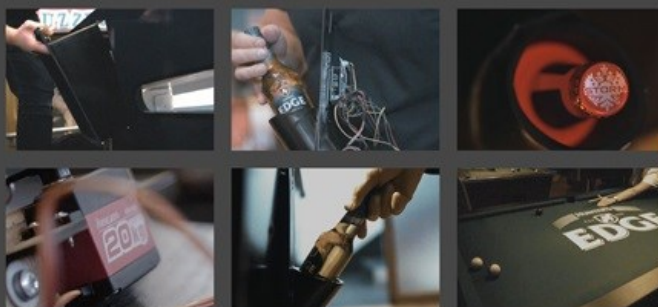


Publicis Machine creates Stones Pool Table BOT - a clever idea and brilliant business solution

For too long, advertising agencies have been stuck in an advertising silo, working as a supplier on what can be long, complicated, and costly chain. Briefs are handed over, ideas are exchanged, advertising campaigns are produced.

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But the times, they have a-changed. And advertising agencies are no longer in the business of advertising - at least, they shouldn't be, if they want to survive.

"It is our job, as a partner in our clients' businesses, to provide them with solutions to business problems. At Publicis Machine, we view our role is much broader than pure 'advertising', because advertising isn't always the answer," says Publicis Machine Group Executive Creative Director Gareth McPherson.

The recently launched Stones BOT, conceptualised by Publicis Machine, is a perfect example.

Stones is South Africa's largest pool hall chain, with 14 locations across the country. The business is driven by coin operated tables, but its biggest revenue driver is actually alcohol sales - specifically those generated by promotions.

The problem was that brands were diverting their promotional budgets to more contemporary venues. Stones approached Publicis Machine looking for a new promotional concept to attract brands back into its venues - something the public hadn't seen before, and something that would actively encourage Stones customers to choose the promotional brand over their usual brand.

The solution came in the form of the Stones BOT, or Bottle Operated Table, which neatly combined the two primary elements of the Stones experience - pool and beer, rewarding customers for buying a specific brand with a free game of pool.

The team replaced the standard coin operating mechanism on traditional pool tables with a custom-designed mechanism that holds a standard beer bottle, and uses a Light Dependent Resistor to recognise the unique RGB signature of individual beverage bottles. In effect, this means that the BOT can 'recognise' individual brands. And these brands can then be used as 'currency' to 'buy' a game of pool.

All customers need do is buy the brand on promotion, place the bottle in the slot and enjoy their free game of pool.

Because the resistor can be calibrated to recognise specific brands, Stones can change the brand on promotion whenever required. The BOT tables can also be branded to increase exposure.

The Stones BOT has been successfully trialled by Hunters to promote Hunters Edge, and based on this initial success, Stones has several more clients waiting in the wings.

"This is encouraging affirmation that we've provided a workable and successful solution to a business problem presented to our client, and we are proud to partner with Stones on this highly creative idea. It takes a brave client to recognise an innovative solution that falls beyond the boundaries of the tried and tested," says McPherson.

[STONE BOT](#) from [Publicis Machine](#) on [Vimeo](#).

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