



#PlayUnified



Special Olympics Play Unified Campaign

Overview

Special Olympics is launching a fully integrated, multi-faceted marketing campaign targeting young people age 14 to 25 throughout the world. The campaign will raise the profile of the Special Olympics brand among current and new advocates and supporters, and it will encourage young people everywhere to view Special Olympics as the movement to join to make a difference and to help create more unified and just communities around the world. Those young people will be the Unified Generation.

This marketing campaign was developed by Young & Rubicam (Y&R) in conjunction with Special Olympics and input we received from our Regions, youth leaders, volunteers and others. It will use all forms of digital and traditional marketing platforms as well as youth-relevant in-market activations. That is in addition to the tens of thousands of sports competitions, school-focused activities, health screenings and major fund raising efforts that occur each year across the Special Olympics movement.

Special Olympics will inspire and mobilize a powerful and Unified Generation of young people to fight critical problems in the world – inactivity, intolerance and injustice. This generation will come to embody the principles of our movement and in turn will shape the world into one in which respect, tolerance and equality prevail. We will inspire attitudes that lead to activity WITH our athletes rather than an approach of doing things FOR our athletes. People with intellectual disabilities say they want to be included as equals in society. The Unified Generation will lead us into the next 50 years of our movement and will do so by simply playing unified.

Background

Members of the Unified Generation, and the pioneers who blazed the trail before them, are already making their marks. We have seen a closing of gaps in health care, a reduction of loneliness and isolation among teens in over 3,000 American schools, a changing of popular language and culture with the elimination of the “R word” in common speech, and improvements in fitness. At the same time, the road to a more Unified Generation has included countries throughout the world where Special Olympics’ proven strategies are being used to expand rights, opportunities, and respect for people with intellectual disabilities everywhere, in the most-developed and the poorest nations alike.

According to the U.N. State of the World Report, nearly half of the world’s population is under the age of 25. We also know that today’s young people want to make a genuine difference in the world. Just writing a check in support of a mission is not enough for today’s young people. They want to contribute to change and feel responsible for that change.

Special Olympics offers programming that provides opportunities for real change to happen. We have seen incredible traction and growth in our Special Olympics Unified Sports® program and youth and school strategy that combine unified sports with youth leadership and whole-school engagement.

The Play Unified campaign uses programming that is working and resonating with young people so they will see Special Olympics as a cause worth engaging in and supporting.

Play Unified is an acquisition campaign for future supporters. Research says that if a person does an activity in high school, they have a 10 percent likelihood of continuing to do that activity later in life. If they do that activity in high school and college, the likelihood they will do the activity jumps to 54 percent. Just think how many future supporters we will bring into the movement. We want young people to choose us as their cause or movement, before they align with a different social cause.

We recognized the need to have an agency partner to help us in this endeavor. We sought an experienced and passionate creative partner capable of developing a marketing platform around a BIG IDEA, in support of our vision, that would resonate on a global level and inspire engagement with our Accredited Programs and our millions of constituents throughout the world, as well as attract new supporters and participants to the movement.

Out of the 23 global agencies we asked for proposals, we selected Y&R. The Y&R global team is very excited about being our partner on this project, providing creative support at no cost. They are genuinely committed professionally and personally. We have had engagement by offices in every region of the world.

In addition, Burson Marsteller has signed on as a pro-bono communications partner to publicize the campaign and to help the public understand Special Olympics as we exist today. We are working with their Fan Experience, Consumer and Brand Marketing team.

Audience

The target audience for this campaign is the unengaged young person between the ages of 14 and 25. This is a person who has not yet been involved in Special Olympics. We focused in on that age range because we have seen incredible action-oriented work from youth leaders of that age in our movement. We will gather contact information for our new fans and establish a relationship that will keep them engaged in our movement.

Attracting younger or older people than our target is fine, but we wanted to have a focus as we built out the campaign.

We also know that Millennials are community- and cause-minded individuals who may likely engage with our activities and offerings.

Special Olympics Campaign Marketing and Brand Guidelines & Assets

Over the past year there has been much work done to create guidance about the best direction for the branding needs of Special Olympics Unified Sports® and the Special Olympics Play Unified Campaign.

It was important that we considered a comprehensive approach to the branding to ensure that our vision for the future was captured and that all the brand materials would work together.

Full guidelines can be found on the [Special Olympics Resources website](#).

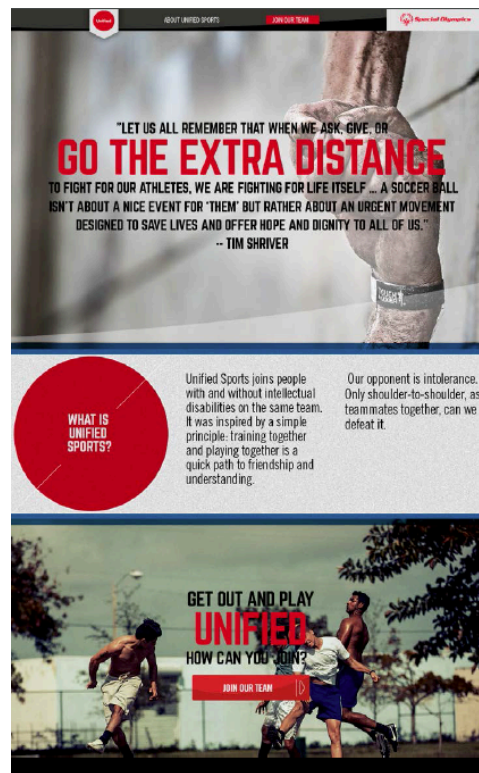
Playunified.org

Thanks to the donated support of Y&R and Perfect Sense Digital, we have a [multi-media site – both for web and mobile to promote the campaign](#). The site is designed to appeal to our target audience of young people ages 14-25.

Social media and event activations will drive people to visit the site to learn more about Special Olympics and our campaign; there is a sign-up form that will allow us to gather contact information so we can establish an ongoing relationship.

The site is designed to make the user feel like they need to join us to make a difference, helping us fight intolerance and other social injustices. The site will be rich in content – both user generated and created by Special Olympics and our partners.

The site will be built out with more content and functionality in the coming weeks and months. We will be looking to our Programs, athletes, young people and supporters to provide content for the site.



The PlayUnified.org site uses video and a striking, clean design to draw site visitors in. It works well on desktop computers and mobile devices.

Campaign Framework Overview

As we learned with our brand alignment work, we need to make sure that we offer the movement a framework, but one that has freedom and flexibility for the vast global markets where we operate. We decided to create the campaign around a core framework that would provide consistency around the world but offer flexibility for Programs to bring the campaign to life in ways that work for their capabilities and markets.

The campaign framework consists of four key elements:



Our Icon

Our symbol of inclusion and acceptance; a visual thread throughout communication.



Unification

Experiences and demonstrations of unity by **bringing together a person with and without an I.D.**



Tension / Challenge

An element of tension/pushing boundaries is crucial in **taking Special Olympics from nice to urgent.**



Play Unified.

The simple call to action that youth can take to fight intolerance, injustice, and inactivity.

Element 1:

Our Icon - Special Olympics Unified Ball Overview

One key device of the campaign is an icon. While many campaigns use a distinctive color ribbon, we decided to use a ball to represent the foundation of our movement, to build brand equity in our symbol, and to have an icon that is not just a graphic, but a tangible element that can be used for connection to bring people together.

Meaning of the Special Olympics Unified Ball

Special Olympics is a social movement, grounded in sport. Sport is a universal language: the great equalizer. And the Special Olympics Unified Ball is the most iconic representation of this sharable experience that transcends geopolitical, racial, economic, gender, and intellectual constructs.

So when you pick up a ball, and throw it to another, things can change. It's amazing how such a simple action can have such a resounding impact. Our Special Olympics Unified Ball will serve as an invitation to connect with our movement in a meaningful and transformative way.

"Let us all remember that when we ask, give, or go the extra distance to fight for our athletes, we are fighting for life itself.... A soccer ball isn't about a nice event for 'them' but rather about an urgent movement designed to save lives and offer hope and dignity to all of us."

- Tim Shriver, Chairman Special Olympics

Unified Ball Design



The Special Olympics Unified Ball is our campaign and brand icon. It has been created both as a graphic element and will be available as physical balls in a variety of Special Olympics sports. Its color is vivid Special Olympics red Pantone186 and is emblazoned with a white Special Olympics Play Unified Campaign mark. The Special Olympics symbol wraps around the ball. To differentiate ourselves from other organizations that use the color red or even use a ball as a symbol, we decided to use multiple types of balls to represent our vision of a unified future.

The chart below shows the Special Olympics sports, official and nationally popular, employing a ball of some sort:

| | | |
|------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Basketball | Netball | Flag Football |
| Bocce | Cricket | Softball |
| Bowling | Baseball | Table Tennis |
| Floor Ball | Handball | Tennis |
| Golf | Football/Soccer | Volleyball |

More specifically, the Special Olympics Unified Balls will achieve the following:

- They will be a physical and visual icon in all communication and Play Unified-focused activations and events;
- Ultimately, they will be associated with the Movement's drive for inclusion and acceptance and illustrate how playing unified translates to living unified and building unified communities;
- Executed successfully, these balls will contribute to building Special Olympics brand awareness, understanding and relevance, leading to greater levels of engagement, advocacy and funding/donations;
- The graphic depiction of the Special Olympics' mark on the Unified Balls will not replace the use of the Special Olympics master brand logo and mark but work with it in a complementary manner, and,
- Lastly, while these balls will be made to spec and "playable", they will not routinely replace the genuine articles in most competitions. They will be used for Unified Sports Experiences or Play Unified moments.

Roles of the Special Olympics Unified Balls

Activation and utilization of these balls will occur across two dimensions:

Symbolic: As a symbol/icon for the movement, the ball will be used in virtual communications across marketing platforms—digital (web site, banner ads, social media, etc.) and traditional (TV, print, out-of-home (billboards), flyers, banners, signs, etc.). It will be manifested by a physical ball as well as by a patch/emblem/decals for those occasions and sports that don't utilize a ball. In these cases, the icon will be a sports-agnostic ball or playground ball.

Functional: Physical balls of various types will be used in and for: commercial production; “game changing” games of catch; marquee Unified Sports Experience events; Unified Sports breaks along Torch Runs; “spontaneous” breakouts of “Play Unified Magic Moments” at sports and fundraising events; local Play Unified events that “pop up” in sports fields and at parks in and around the city of Los Angeles leading up to and during the World Games; ; ceremonies kicking off National Games of every host country; celebrity-signed balls for auctions/fund raising event; and as awards routinely given out by SOI and Programs.

We don't envision these balls being used on an ongoing basis for routine practices and competitions.

How to get Special Olympics Unified Balls

Special Olympics is in the process of procuring a variety of balls including soccer, basketball, volleyball, beach balls (for Polar Plunge and concerts), and more.

The design of the ball has proven to be challenging for most ball manufactures; however, we have found a company who can secure specially designed Special Olympics Unified Balls. In the coming weeks, an ordering and fulfillment process will be made available to Special Olympics Regions and Programs so that they can order balls at the most cost effective price possible for the Movement.

Because of the unique design of the balls, we have found that bulk orders will be the most cost effective way to get consistent and well-made balls produced.

Special Olympics Unified Ball Graphics

A variety of Special Olympics Unified Ball graphics have been designed for promotional materials. You may obtain Unified Ball graphics through your Regional Communications Director.



Element 2:

Together

A key component of the Play Unified Campaign framework is having people with and without intellectual disability together. We want to demonstrate the idea of unified in as many ways as possible to reinforce respect, inclusion and equality. This can happen in a variety of ways:

- Photography – use photos showing people with and without intellectual disabilities together. Use a Special Olympics Unified Ball in the photos. See [these content creation guidelines](#) for tips on getting the best photos for the campaign.
- Emcees – Use unified co-emcees during Ceremonies, awards dinners, fundraising events, etc.
- Media spokespersons – Use unified spokespersons for media opportunities
- Art – work with local artists to design a poster, shirt or piece of art with a Special Olympics athlete
- Music – Work with local musical artists and performer to create unified performances with Special Olympics athletes.

We will be targeting media and content opportunities to infuse our message and vision of Unified. For example, we aim to get a Unified Pair on the American reality television show “The Amazing Race” and we will pitch a fashion spread using one of our global ambassadors together with a Special Olympics athlete.

While many outside Special Olympics may not be receptive to this idea at first, we will aim to be persistent and determined to share our vision of unified.

Element 3: Play Unified Activities

Another aspect of the campaign framework is to bring the Call to Action “Play Unified” to life in a variety of ways. Through activities that young people can organize, to activities our Programs can incorporate into already existing events, we will encourage positive, unified play that will send a statement of respect and inclusion.

Play Unified activities bring the recreation model of Special Olympics Unified Sports® to life. These are not meant to be formal Unified Sports competitions, but rather moments where Special Olympics athletes can connect with people without intellectual disabilities. They are meant as moments of connection to accomplish all or any of the following:

- Introduce Special Olympics to a new audience
- Create a sports moment at a fundraising event
- Add a Unified Sports aspect to traditional Special Olympics games or competition
- Serve as a pop-up or guerilla marketing tool at other popular events

Tools on how to create Play Unified Moments are on the [campaign resources page](#).

Element 4:

Creating Importance & Urgency

Pushing the agenda in a peaceful way has been a part of our DNA at Special Olympics since its inception. When Eunice Kennedy Shriver held the first Camp Shriver in 1962, she tried something that no one had done before. She brought young people with and without intellectual disabilities together in a day camp setting where they played, learned and had fun together. This was revolutionary for the time. The first Special Olympics Games in 1968 were also revolutionary and challenged society to think differently.

Tapping back into those roots, we want to position Special Olympics as a movement that is making urgent and important change. To do this, we need to make society aware that there are problems and Special Olympics provides real and tangible solutions.

A Fully Integrated Marketing Campaign

The Special Olympics Play Unified campaign is fully integrated and will activate in every possible way we can connect with potential supporters. This is different than a public service campaign in that we will aim to raise funds through a variety of marketing and fundraising activations and partnerships.



Traditional Placed Media: We plan to have TV, print and out of home advertising that we can use with strategic placements. We have TV storyboards and are currently seeking pro-bono or low-bono support to produce the TV ads. You will find [print ads](#) on the campaign resources page that can be used for publication. Throughout the course of the campaign, we will create a variety of ads to keep the campaign fresh.

Cause Marketing/Corporate: We are working with our partners to activate the campaign in ways that makes sense to their brand and our partnership. The campaign offers a platform for our partners to mobilize, helping to build brand awareness. We are also using the campaign to attract new brands and

partners. Targeting young people and offering a cause platform will open new doors for support. As partner activations are finalized, we will share them with our Programs. If Programs have ideas or local partners who would like to engage at a national or global level around the campaign, please contact Michael Hoar mhoar@specialolympics.org

Partnerships: Special Olympics has many partnerships with sports leagues and federations, service organizations, government ministries and departments, associations and more. The campaign offers a way to activate those partnerships in new and innovative ways. For example, SOI will be working with the Lions Clubs International to activate their youth Leos clubs to support the campaign. In addition, there will be tools available on how to activate through many of the various existing sports partnerships. We encourage Programs to leverage local partnerships to activate around the campaign and use the campaign to open doors with potential partners.

Public Relations/earned media: SOI, with the support of Burson Marsteller, will be focused on top-tier national (U.S.) and international media placements. We will be looking at unique ways to infuse the campaign into content such as television shows. With each placement we will be looking for rich stories that represent the ideals of the campaign and we welcome Programs to submit those stories at specialolympics.org/share. We especially need stories of friendship between people with and without intellectual disabilities that have happened through Special Olympics Unified Sports®. We will also have 'unified' spokespeople whenever possible. Programs are encouraged to work with local media to place stories about the campaign, Unified Sports, youth involvement, etc.

Events: Throughout the Special Olympics movement there are more than 81,000 games and competitions and thousands more fundraising events each year. Tools on how to bring the campaign to life at already existing Games, Polar Plunges, etc. are available on the [campaign resources site](#). We will also be leveraging large-scale events such as the Super Bowl, NBA All Star Game and more to bring Special Olympics to greater audiences. The campaign will come to life through the first-ever Special Olympics Unified Relay Across America which will precede the 2015 World Games, as well as throughout the World Games.

Digital Engagement: The campaign will invite young people to join our movement through digital engagement. We will create opportunities for sharing and creating content and various activations from "Pass the Ball" engagement to posting campaign messages and stories. We will use a variety of social media channels and web sites. See the [tools and resources available to learn more](#). We will drive traffic to playunified.org and campaign activations will be tagged #playunified. Consistent tagging and sharing will help us trend and drive aggregate likes, shares, comments and views.

Products and Merchandise: We will be activating a variety of merchandise opportunities through licensing, ecommerce, retail supporters and more. Special Olympics Unified Balls and other campaign merchandise will be available through an ecommerce solution that is being set up. Additional merchandise such as wearables, decals, car magnets, pins, and other give-aways are also being created. SOI is working with vendors to manufacture our Unified Balls and Programs should work through SOI and Regional offices to obtain Unified Balls.

Global Ambassadors & Celebrity Engagement: We will engage our global ambassadors and other high-profile personalities from the world of sports, music and entertainment. Activation tools for celebrities will be made available here on [the campaign resources page](#).