

Channel 5

Give me five!

Channel 5 got its name, look and attitude from Wolff Olins.

A compelling and distinctive brand and marketing mix gave this fifth entrant into the British terrestrial TV station arena a 93% customer recognition within three months of its launch.



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Channel 5 Broadcasting was awarded the license from the Independent Television Commission in a hotly contested battle to become the UK's fifth terrestrial television channel. Victory went to the consortium led by MAI and Pearson. The largest commercial television launch in Britain since ITV in 1959, Channel 5 went on air in 1997. Within the first 12 months it was available to 80% of people in the UK and had captured its target 5% market share.

Nine million sets to re-tune

Television had changed dramatically even since the fifth channel was first proposed. Viewers now have access to a huge choice from cable and satellite channels, and with the start of digital broadcasting there is even more. To attract audiences and generate advertising revenue Channel 5 had to have a strongly differentiated positioning. Also, despite limited re-sources, it was vital to develop innovative, distinctive programming. As part of the license agreement Channel 5 had to re-tune TV sets in over nine million homes in the months leading up to broadcast. The challenge was both logistical and financial. Starting as an unknown entity, Channel 5 had to inform the public about re-tuning, as well as rapidly building awareness of its launch.



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Wolff Olins worked for Channel 5 in two stages. First we created an image awareness campaign for the channel's re-tuning identity, under the banner 'Give me 5'. The Channel 5 image and brand were applied in poster and print advertising, re-tuning mailings, vehicles and staff clothing.

For the re-tuning campaign we also produced a video for re-tuners to run while working, a promotional piece for use in Blockbuster Video stores and a film aimed at advertisers and commercial sponsors.

The re-tuning campaign achieved 92% unprompted awareness in under three months.

The campaign was so successful that Channel 5 decided to use the same identity for its onscreen branding. Within its first year of operation the new Channel 5 had achieved its target 5% of market share and the mass youth audience it wanted. □

