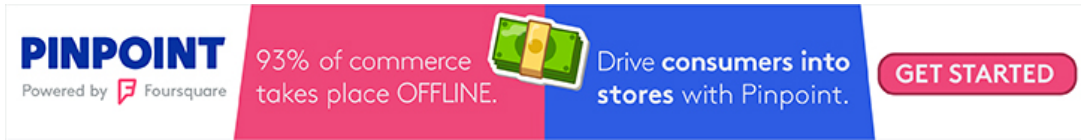


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The Spot: Home Makeover Lowe's gets cooler and more contemporary, beginning with a sweeping indie dance number from BBDO

By Tim Nudd

October 4, 2011, 6:35 AM EDT | Advertising & Branding



GENESIS: Lowe's wanted a change. The No. 2 player in home improvement had been developing My Lowe's, an online system to help people log their DIY projects and purchases, and asked BBDO for a whole new brand positioning, emphasizing innovation. The company was ready to see itself as a challenger brand like Target or Virgin America, and project a younger, more contemporary vibe. "As a challenger brand, you have

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a different energy," says BBDO executive creative director Wil Boudreau. "You're more aggressive. You talk less about the category and more about yourself." The agency proposed "Never stop improving" as a tagline to embody the mind-set of Lowe's, its employees, and its customers. The line appeals to the target market of men and women "who love the idea of the home as a form of self-expression," says Tom Lamb, Lowe's svp of marketing and advertising. The 60-second launch spot—a sweeping, meticulously choreographed dance number set to Gin Wigmore's 2009 indie track "Don't Stop"—shows a couple moving through space and time, from room to room and decade to decade, improving their homes from their youth all the way to retirement.

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COPYWRITING/SOUND: "Never stop improving" tested wonderfully. But how to execute it? The agency decided that music, with its emotional sway, should be central to the storytelling. "It's something Starbucks does, and Target does. Nobody does it in our category," says Boudreau. "We would license tracks from unknown artists, and execute the ads in a music-video style. We wouldn't be in the store at all. We'd be in people's lives." After much searching, BBDO's music department found Wigmore, a 25-year-old New Zealander. "It was so right, right away," Boudreau says of her song. "It sold the whole campaign."



ART DIRECTION: Everything visible on the sets is something you can buy at Lowe's. The overall look is heightened but realistic. The lighting matches the emotion of each life stage, "golden when married, a little harsher light when raising kids, bright and hopeful morning sun at the start," says director Dave Meyers. The costumes show the characters as inventive, enterprising types. "They're not dressed in Gap or L.L. Bean," says Boudreau. "They're the funkier, more creative couple on the block."

FILMING: The shoot spanned two days on a custom-built set and a half-day in a backyard in Los Angeles. Due to a tight production schedule, most of the visuals had to be captured in camera, not added in post. "That turned out to be the magic of it," says Meyers. "Things we would have likely relied on for post became well-timed set gags, and it gave the piece a certain honest charm." The falling ceiling fan is real, for example, as is the wallpaper (it's fabric, with the picture frames and light fixtures added digitally). The wall that the husband

pushes is a practical wall, moving on skids. The ad looks like one long camera move and has a flowing cinematography with seamless transitions and slight halts here and there for a breath. "The pauses were instinctual," says Meyers. "Most of the time, the shots felt rushed, so I would lengthen them a second or two to squeeze in the humanity."



TALENT: The choreographer, Hi-Hat, worked out dances that looked expressive, interactive, effortless, and fun, not rehearsed. The lead actors are a Latino woman and a white man. "It's inclusive, it's where we are in the world, it reflects their customer base," says Boudreau. They were subtly aged through the spot, but two different actors were used for the final scene to avoid spending hours on makeup.

MEDIA: National broadcast and cable, particularly HGTV and what Lamb calls "watercooler" network shows like *Dancing With the Stars*. A 15-second spot, done all in post and showing birds renovating a birdhouse, is running in pre-roll online. The next big spot, in mid-October, will introduce My Lowe's. The new positioning will extend to upcoming print all the way down to circulars and in-store signage.

THE SPOTS:





CREDITS:

Agency: BBDO New York
Client: Lowe's
Spot: "Don't Stop"
Chief Creative Officer: David Lubars
Executive Creative Director: Wil Boudreau
Creative Director: Joe Volpicelli
Art Director: Jake Blumenau
Copywriter: Colin Ilsley
EP: Kevin Wilson
Assistant Producer: Zubin Simpson
Music Producer: Loren Parkins
Production Company: @radical.media
Director: Dave Meyers
EP: Jim Bouvet
DP: Marcelo Durst
LP: Steve Fredriksz
Effects Companies: Mass Market, My Active Driveway
Editorial: Cutting Room
Editor: Chuck Willis
Track: "Don't Stop"
Artist: Gin Wigmore

Spot: "Birdhouse"
CCO: David Lubars
EVP/ECD : Wil Boudreau
VP/CD: Dominick Baccollo
AD: Jen Lu
CW: Roberto Danino
VP/EP : Kevin Wilson
Assistant Producer: Zubin Simpson
Music Producer: Loren Parkins

FX Company: My Active Driveway
Creative Director: Steve Choo
Executive Producer: John Fego
Track: "Don't Stop"
Artist: Gin Wigmore

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About the Author



Tim Nudd is creative editor at Adweek.

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tim nolan · 4 years ago

The birdhouse was clever, cute, and wonderfully art directed.

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Guest · 4 years ago

"Never stop improving" is an excellent thought. But, please stop with these over the top song and dance numbers. This is BBDO at its worst. Bird House spot wasn't bad.

^ | v · Reply · Share

Andrea_P62 · 4 years ago

When you see this on TV, it's hard to tell what is going on and who it's for. Which negates the entire purpose of television advertising. This article hits the nail on head (pun intended) that they are trying to be Target - instead of their own identity. It's hard to build a brand when you keep changing your look and tag line every year.

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BLynn · 4 years ago

looks like a Target ad.

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