

# What Apparel Brand Dickies Learned from Its Remote Campaign

## ARTICLE |

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**W**orkwear brand Dickies recently launched a digital-first campaign to build on its ongoing diversity efforts. Due to pandemic restrictions, the campaign had to be shot by the very creators it features, using their own devices.

We spoke with Kathy Hines, vice president of global marketing and licensing at Dickies, about what it was like to shoot the campaign remotely and what the brand learned.

### **Tell us about the Yours to Make campaign.**

Before COVID-19, when we started planning the campaign, we were thinking about how we live in a world of such extreme divisiveness, and that we want to share this voice of inclusion, that we're all actually more the same than we are different. And when the pandemic hit, we felt that this message was more important than ever.

We decided to choose 10 people who reflect all the regions that we serve. By representing everyone from a blue-collar worker to a creative artisan, we could paint a picture of all the diverse communities that we serve in an authentic way.

## **Working on a campaign during the pandemic has been a learning curve for many marketers. Did you run into any challenges along the way?**

As marketers, we all want to very proactively manage any content that we're creating. But we had to let that go a bit for this campaign. We literally had to hand over the creative production to 10 different people. Imagine saying as a marketer, "This is going to be shot on an iPhone with real people, with Zoom creative direction, and without a stylist on set." It was such a gamble, but what came back was so authentic. We had hundreds of hours of footage. Rather than going on set with all these makers and having one cohesive shoot, we distributed all of that creative production, brought the content back, and then put a very cohesive lens around it.

## **Will remote campaigns be something you'd consider doing post-pandemic?**

Absolutely. We now know we can put creative production in the hands of the people who have embraced us as a brand. Quite frankly, a remote campaign can be much stronger because it's coming from the people's perspective and not a brand perspective. The most honest thing in the world that we can do is to not tell people how to represent our brand, but to let them represent the brand the way they live it every day.

## **Aside from adapting your approach to campaigns amid the pandemic, how has COVID-19 affected the company overall?**

It's interesting, because our pivot actually started back in January with our business in Asia-Pacific, and particularly China, where we had to look at some pandemic-related store closures. By the time the pandemic began spreading quickly across Europe and North America, we had started to get a handle on how agile we'd have to be and how quickly we'd have to move. In March, when it first hit North America, we launched a social campaign around maker workshops and tutorials. Our thought behind that campaign was wanting to help people who were under lockdown continue to make and create with objects that they had right in their homes.

**As a result of this social campaign, have you seen an influx of new customers coming to your site?**

Yes, absolutely. When we were locked in our houses, when we couldn't go out and interact, our only outlet was our screens and digital. Given how uncertain everything was across our region, we were surprised by the amount of online demand, both from an engagement and an overall digital perspective. While our ecommerce business has grown, we don't want to discount the brick-and-mortar side. During the pandemic, Walmart and Target remained open, and they're two of our largest national footprints. And because of their importance to consumers during this difficult time, they were also performing really strongly.

We see that consumers still have a strong desire to leave their homes—not just to pick up a product, but to have that shopping experience. So, we're thinking really hard about that. And while a lot of retailers might want to reduce their footprint, we do feel that there will continue to be an interest and a need for the physical to complement the digital.