

Intro [00:00:01] Welcome to the Collective Intelligence podcast from IPG. We deliver marketing insights that help modern brands thrive. In this episode, you'll hear about the latest perspectives featured at intelligence.interpublic.com. Listen, then log on to find new opportunities for your brand to stand out.

Jen (host) [00:00:21] Hello, everyone. Thank you so much for joining us on the Collective Intelligence podcast for another episode of CIA Conversations. My name is Jen and today I will be talking with Sarah Dale, SVP of Brand Partnerships and Strategy at Jack Morton. Thank you so much, Sarah, for being here. Super Bowl is a big game, and the breadth of marketing, advertising and communications that goes along with it is just as big and some may even say bigger. So we are here today to talk once again about Sunday's season ender. On our last episode, we spoke about traditional commercials during the game, promotions and storytelling. Today, we will dive into the energy and buzz of onsite activations, media, digital and fan engagement, and not just a reference to the Super Bowl, but the trends that are driving these areas into the future. Sarah, can you kick things off by talking about Jack Morton's work with Super Bowl this year?

Sarah D [00:01:15] Sure. Thanks, Jen. So bear with me, I'm going to talk through three of our programs that we, that we activated leading up to and throughout the Super Bowl and are currently wrapping up as well. So first we worked with Tonal, the home gym company, to not only celebrate and launch their Strength Made Me campaign, which starred, is starring Serena Williams. We worked with Tonal to curate a tonal work out and content studio now known as the tonal house. Where we, you know, filled with athletes and influencers who got the chance to experience the brand and then talk about it. Throughout the weekend, the tonal house was in Beverly Hills, and it was visited by star athletes, celebrities, influencers for private workouts and content shoots for the brand. And then on Friday night, we had influencers and athletes and friends of the brand who came to the house to see the launch of the campaign and which celebrated women and strong women in fitness and sports well into the night. Secondly, we also helped Binance launch their Anti-celebrity campaign, where we leveraged celebrities to tell people not to trust celebrities, to trust themselves when it comes to crypto. So working with Jose Balvin and Jimmy Butler, we told people to do their own research and learn crypto before they trade. So on game day, when fans saw a celebrity talking about crypto, which they did because it was known as the Crypto Bowl, they could go to Binance Academy to sound the alarm and win an NFT. And they also got an intro lesson on crypto, right? So it was a really disruptive narrative that delivered Binance as a hero. And then third, don't forget our favorite beer brand, the Molson Coors clients use Super Bowl as an opportunity to host key customers and employees. They usually bring a little bit over 100 people to the Super Bowl, and they also leverage their partnership with the Pro Football Hall of Fame to create a consumer facing sweepstakes and experience which included a luncheon and a tailgate before the game as well. They are busy,

Jen (host) [00:03:18] exciting stuff, and you know, a common thread that I'm hearing is a lot of in-person interaction. So of course, that leads me to the obvious question did COVID have any effect, you know, in terms of your initial strategy? And then also, as things progressed, was there any need to pivot and and this the question does it have to be just particular to Super Bowl? It could be any time where you work in the last several months how the obvious pandemic has had an impact.

Sarah D [00:03:45] Well, I think I personally might have taken 10 COVID tests between the lead up and then throughout the weekend, so it was it was definitely a consideration.

And I do think COVID compliance is a new line item, you know, on the production plan on the production budget, we had a COVID compliance team on site at the tonal house. We required vaccination cards. We required a negative PCR test within 48 hours. And if they didn't have it, we had somebody there that could do a rapid PCR test. Outside of that, I think we made plans and alternate plans in case we did see did see people fall under the weather, which they did, and we were able to quickly pivot with a new speaker here or some extra communications there. We were prepared assuming that something like that was bound to happen. I think that that pandemic has taught us all to be flexible and be prepared for the inevitable, and the show went on right so that we were prepared. And like I said, I think that COVID compliance and health considerations are just a new checkbox and that needs to be planned for and budgeted for and, and so it absolutely came into play.

Jen (host) [00:04:59] Yeah, I do feel like those contingencies are just going to kind of for at least a while, be kind of a perennial part of just planning and and having plan, you know, BCD. But we also talked a lot on our previous podcast in terms of just the the feeling of energy and lightness and optimism that infused so much of the Super Bowl in a way because it does feel like we were kind of tiptoeing out of the shadow of the pandemic. And there was this collective kind of relief of being able to gather to some extent led to a great extent in many cases. Did you feel that both in just being there? And then also as you were working with these influencers and celebrities and talent, did you kind of feel that palpable energy?

Sarah D [00:05:39] For sure, I think that there was a renewed energy that has not been there in a while, right? So it was almost like the energy was back, but it was back, plus some, you know, so it was it was more than ever. I think people were excited to be back together, but they also appreciate it more than ever. They appreciate being able to not be on a Zoom call or do a virtual appearance. They appreciate being able to touch each other. And then especially for Tonal, part of our whole experience with getting people's hands on the Tonal. And for Molson Coors, it was getting our customers together and celebrating together that the successes. So I think that there's a new appreciation for those in-person experiences that were so much more than the game. There is the emotion, the sense of community. It was definitely palpable.

Jen (host) [00:06:29] Yeah, and actually one thing that we've been talking a lot about on our previous podcast and just in general since the game is that a lot of the pre-game trade press focused on, you know, the second screen viewing of the game, and that is that fans are watching the game while also on another device, kind of making it imperative to reach them in multiple touch points. How did that factor into your work? Kind of on the experiential side of things, was there, you know, what kind of digital component was there and did the energy lend itself to being shared? And, you know, kind of organically just pushed around social media?

Sarah D [00:07:04] Yeah. I mean, I think social content and activation is an extension of everything we do. And I think that that is amplified more now than ever. We saw that across Binance, across Tonal, even in Molson Coors. You know that the sweepstakes, the social component, I think that's key, right? And I think Jack Morton, you know, we always encourage our clients to use technology to enhance the experience, whether it's taking that to the social screen, whether it's AR, whether it's QR, whether it's a different application. I think that that element is not only necessary for the brand to succeed, but for the consumers to enjoy the experience and to make the most of that experience. That makes sense.

Jen (host) [00:07:51] 100 percent so. So really, it's just something that's being kind of infused into your DNA, and it's not a Super Bowl specific thing. It's just the world that we live in and the nature of the work, right?

Sarah D [00:08:01] Yes, the Super Bowl didn't, I mean, everything on this Super Bowl stage is amplified. So it became a, I guess, a bigger piece of the puzzle, but it's always a piece of the puzzle.

Jen (host) [00:08:11] OK, so kind of switching gears a little bit, but kind of related. I want to talk about Gen Z and certainly as digital natives, this is related to what we were just talking about. Pretty much research right before the game said that half of them were not watching the game and that presented a challenge to those producing traditional spots or if not a challenge, at least posed the question of is it worth it to spend seven million on a 30 second spot targeting Gen Z if they're not there? And further to that research even showed that in comparison to millennials, half of Gen Z kind of prefer gaming and e-sports over live sporting events in general. How does Gen Z present challenges or maybe even opportunities in your work related to the Super Bowl or otherwise, and what that might look like in the future?

Sarah D [00:08:57] Good question. Well, I think the challenge is an opportunity in itself, right, so I think that it forces us to think about more than the game and create an experience beyond the game. So whether it's on site and, you know, taking that entire stadium and considering that the entire stadium as our canvas, right, not just the field or not just the court, but creating those areas and those shared spaces and those places for moments, for Gen Z and for these folks that don't want to sit in a seat and watch the game the whole time and they want to or they do want to watch the game the whole time, but they want to do it together and create a shared moment, right? So I think from an in-stadium perspective, we're thinking about the whole stadium, not just the field or the court. And then I think beyond for most of the people who are not in the stadium and watching. I think it's about, you know, again, creating a bigger experience than what's happening on the field or the court. So is there any social engagement? Is there an app engagement? Is there some way that we can bring the experience to them in their living room or in their space that makes them feel a part of that experience? And there, there are ways to do that. There's AR, you know, there's, there's mobile application. So I think that finding ways to create that emotion and that sense of community is a good challenge. It's a good problem to have.

Jen (host) [00:10:18] Yeah, absolutely. And you know, supporting that, the research that I referenced earlier found that even those Gen Zers that do watch the game aren't necessarily sports fans, but they are there for, as you say, that collective cultural moment. Is there anything in terms of future digital innovation? Dare I say the metaverse, that will further drive engagement with that demographic as they gain spending power and become more of a target? Or are they going to become a target? Do these trends just simply cross all demographics?

Sarah D[00:10:51] I mean, the big game did go to the Metaverse, right, so I think that that is going to only be a bigger, bigger part of these mega events moving forward, for sure. I think too, you know, Gen Z and millennials and and fans, they they care about more than the game. So what are brands doing for them and about things that they care about, right? So it's more it's not just about the Super Bowl, it's about what does that brand stand for? You know, what are that brand values? What are the brand morals and do they align

with with what mine are and where are those synergies? So I think even in addition to what I've already said about the importance of using technology for ease and using technology for a feeling of connection and creating that emotion in that community, I think showing fans or consumers that you care about the same things they do and then actually putting, you know, actions speak louder than words, right? So actually doing it is important in another connection.

Jen (host) [00:11:51] Yeah, absolutely, and especially, you know, speaking, I mean to millennials and to Gen Z, probably specifically authenticity is so important. And if that kind of they they feel iffy about that, it could be a big turnoff. So yeah, I mean, speaking to who's there and what their interests are and which is what speaks to them on an authentic level, Will will definitely engage. Let's look at Super Bowl and then sporting events, perhaps in general and then even just brand experiences. What are you really excited about in the future? What do you see driving these experiences and just overall?

Sarah D [00:12:27] Well, I am really excited that we're doing these experiences back together, and I think that brands are really pushing that envelope and they are thinking about campaigns through a 360 lens so that the Tonal Strength Made Me Super Bowl commercial. That wasn't all, right? You know, we have a whole experience. We have a lot of extensions that are brought down into, into activation, into social. Everything's very 360. And so I think that brands are not only creating more meaningful campaigns, but they're making those campaigns more robust, more dynamic, and it makes it more exciting as a result. So I think that that's that's exciting to me.

Jen (host) [00:13:10] OK, so we kind of talked about how COVID factored into your initial planning. But beyond that, what, what did your strategic planning look like going into the Super Bowl this year?

Sarah D [00:13:20] Yeah, I think for these clients in particular, when they briefed us on what they needed and what they what their goals and objectives were. Our role and our strategic plans were built around, you know, talent identification, talent vetting, talent management, content development, production, social and earned media, and then measuring those results across both Tonal and, and Binance, for example. And then across Tonal and Molson Coors, there was hospitality and event management. So vetting those, you know, events and opportunities negotiating those, what those assets could look like in real life on the ground and then managed, then managing those those experiences for those those clients and their key customers and their guests on the ground as well. So looking into it or going into it, those were kind of the the two problems from a talent arm and in the hospitality and event piece.

Jen (host) [00:14:12] That was kind of your strategy going into it this year. We talked a lot about Tonal and Binance and kind of everything around there. What are they looking to do next year already looking to the future? And what's kind of going into those early stage planning for what's next for those brands?

Sarah D [00:14:29] Yeah, you know, this was the first year for me, Tonal's a young brand, and this was their first year. This is their first activation, to be honest, and this was their first year at Super Bowl, and they are so excited that they're already ready to book Arizona and do it bigger and better there. And so that's good news for all of us, and that's going to be an ongoing thing. People are going to be looking. When do I get into Tonal house for my workout? Or, you know, what's tonal house doing this year? And so that's really exciting to know that that was such a success for them, and it will be an ongoing part of

the Super Bowl experience for everyone and Binance too. You know, they felt really comfortable that their social campaign gave them a space to play in and gave them a way to break through the clutter of the Crypto Bowl without having a TV spot. And they are extending their efforts in the U.S. through twenty two with us, and so I'm excited to build out that strategy and what that looks like with those E properties and people that make sense to their consumers.

Jen (host) [00:15:34] OK, great. So it sounds like talent was a real key consideration in terms of Tonal and Binance's entry into this big arena. What were kind of the key considerations for you with that?

Sarah D [00:15:47] It really was. And I think, you know, going back to you, you mentioned the key to being authentic and credible. And I think that that is so important. Even more important when it comes to talent, whether it's athletes or celebrities or influencers is really finding the right talent for the brand. And not, maybe, not maybe just who's on the front of a weekly or a different magazine, you know, or who's who's the latest star of Superman. But I think you're finding the right talent for the brand that is authentic and credible and makes sense. And it will maximize the relationship between the brand and the talent. It will maximize the connection between the brand and their audience, who now finds them credible and authentic. And they will believe, if they can believe that talent better, they will believe the brand better as well, I think. And so that's really important, and I think you'll see more of that coming from Jack Morton across Tonal, across Binance and other brands very soon.

Jen (host) [00:16:51] So, you know, keeping with the theme of of talent and talking once again about Binance. So J Balvin and Jimmy Butler, how did those come to be?

Sarah D [00:17:04] Good question, right? So you know, I think when Binance was looking for celebrities to say, don't listen to celebrities and to be heard, believe, you know, in a believing way and to be trusted by consumers in this space that people aren't quite sure what to think about. We were looking for celebrities, musicians, athletes, actors who did have a general interest in crypto and who were themselves looking to learn about crypto and invest in the education and weren't trying to tell people, be brave, do crypto or, you know, everybody's doing it, be like us. And so we wanted people who are known for being not only having that general interest and already down the path of being educated and getting educated, but who are known for being independent, thought leaders who are outspoken, who are comfortable speaking for themselves and and speaking out and who who fans and consumers would know. Oh, J Balvin isn't being told what to say. He's saying what he believes, right? Same with Jimmy Butler. And so I think. Them being trustworthy and trying to be credible on this base was able to then translate, that feeling transitions to the brand as if they were selected.

Jen (host) [00:18:25] Amazing. Once again going back to that authenticity and just coming from a really organic and natural place, that's amazing. So we're really seeing that experience is becoming really critical to sports organizations, and we see that sports is not just about watching the game. It's really just about a total experience and connection with the community. Can you speak more about that?

Sarah D [00:18:47] For sure. So I think, you know, we hit on a few different ways that it is, you know, about the total experience and and what that community looks like. And for us, we work with a lot of clients in the sports space and not only leveraging their marketing rights, but actual physical spaces and stadiums, right? So I think we're looking to create

more experiences beyond those logos. So maybe it's cold rails for Coors Light, right? And you can actually feel that brand in those cold rails are impacting that amazing cold beer. We're using technology to make things easier, more convenient, more fun. You know, like, everybody loves AR glasses, everybody loves QR codes. Those are both consumer friendly and very brand valuable, right? So we're pulling those into all of our ideas and our experiences. And then again, just designing shared spaces, whether it's in person spaces or digital spaces where people can share moments, capture moments and feel that that sense of community.

Jen (host) [00:19:56] Yeah. So, Sarah, thank you so much. This was a wonderful conversation. Thank you so much for being with us here today.

Sarah D [00:20:01] Thank you, Jen. It was great to be here. Really appreciate it.

Jen (host) [00:20:04] Thank you so much to all of our listeners for joining us on the Collective Intelligence podcast. Bye for now.

Outro [00:39:43] Thank you for listening to the Collective Intelligence podcast. For more marketing insights and ideas, please subscribe to this podcast or visit intelligence.interpublic.com.