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New Balance Integrates New 'Total Fit' Message

By Jeff Fleischer

BOSTON — In March, New Balance launched an integrated marketing campaign around the new slogan “Total Fit.” The strategy was timed to work with the launch of three new athletic shoe styles, but with messaging used for the company’s entire product line and across its advertising platforms.

New Balance conducted consumer research for the campaign, starting with wear testing for the shoes themselves and online message testing in the United States, China, Japan and Germany near the end of product development.

Just a few weeks before the total campaign launched, New Balance introduced a series of in-store displays incorporating the same “Total Fit” message. These displays debuted on Feb. 20, with the company shipping 1,500 P-O-P print packages and 1,700 units with an LCD display. Of those LCDs, 187 were distributed internationally to markets including Brazil, Australia, Europe and Mexico. In the United States, the nationwide recipients ranged from independent retailers to key accounts such as Foot Locker, Champs and Academy Sports.

The LCD piece — which, like the rest of the in-store campaign, was built by **United Displaycraft**, Des Plaines, Ill. — is a compact, standalone unit that ships preassembled. MeLissa Mips, creative group manager for New Balance, says the in-store package was designed to encourage retailer participation, and that the LCD piece does that in a few ways. It has motion-sensor activation to conserve energy and can also be activated via a button on the unit.

The display is powered by two lantern batteries and ships with four such batteries so that retailers can use it without incurring any energy costs. The unit also lets retailers control the LCD’s volume and brightness in order to tailor it to the needs of their store. The on-screen messaging incorporates animated images from New Balance’s new TV commer-



The LCD screen on the counter unit (left) can be activated by a button or motion sensors. Window posters, counter cards and window clings also support the in-store campaign.

cial and also highlights a few of the “88 Points of Fit” the brand incorporates into its shoe design.

“We actually kept it very simple so, as we update content, we don’t have to worry too much, and it’s easy to update the graphics,” Mips says. “Because ‘Total Fit’ is such a key and overarching message for us, retailers can really use these pieces to display any of our shoe products.”

The in-store piece holds one shoe atop a gray, textured base that features both the brand’s traditional “NB” logo in white and its new ad slogan, “Love/Hate. This is the new balance.” That slogan is also prominently featured in print advertising and two 30-second television spots that debuted in March and refers to runners’ love/hate relationship with the commitment of their training regimen. The display’s backing is mostly red, with white and gray stripes below it. The rectangular LCD screen is centered near the top, with the on/off button and speaker to the left. The “Total Fit” logo, with two curved arrows forming an oval, sits directly below the LCD. The piece also has

slots on its back that allow it to function as a wall unit.

“We really designed it so that we could update content and allow our retailers to have longer shelf lives,” says Mips, adding that the displays were designed to remain up at least four to six weeks but can be used for multiple financial quarters. “That’s one reason why we designed it to be both tabletop and slatwall, to be flexible to allow retailers to update content.”

The in-store package also includes window posters, counter cards and window clings. All share the same red, white and gray color scheme, the “Total Fit” logo, and text that incorporates both the “Love/Hate” slogan and the “Points of Fit” concept. Multiple pieces depict the new 769 running shoe.

The package also has a sweepstakes piece, which gives customers who buy product a \$5 rebate and gives retail employees one entry per sale toward a nationwide prize drawing. The number of sweepstakes entries will help New Balance gauge the effectiveness of the in-store campaign. **SM**