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Risk-taking Romanian campaign wins \$10,000 Warc Prize for Innovation

A campaign that put a struggling chocolate brand at the centre of a national debate in Romania has won the 2012 Warc Prize for Innovation.

American Rom, by Bucharest-based BV McCann Erickson for food manufacturer, Kandia Dulce, beat competitors from 23 countries to claim the \$10,000 cash prize awarded by [Warc](#), the global marketing information service, for the best case study of innovation in communications.

The entry edged out the Prize Runner-up –the Colombian guerrilla demobilisation initiative – *FARC Operation Christmas*, and other shortlisted cases from Febreze, Dettol, GlaxoSmithKline’s Polident and Promote Iceland.

Prize Chairman Jonathan Mildenhall, the Coca-Cola Company’s vice president, global advertising strategy and content excellence, applauded the campaign’s impact as “huge”.

Mr Mildenhall said: *“Hands down the biggest idea, the most compelling execution and the most impressive results of the shortlisted cases were from American Rom. If all marketing platforms were this impressive, the world would definitely be a more interesting and dynamic place. But in Operation Christmas, we also had a very, very credible Runner-up, and all in all we had a worthy shortlist.”*

The Prize was judged by a panel of industry experts from Nokia, General Motors, PHD, DDB and comScore, all headed by Mr Mildenhall. The judges praised the daring and scale of Rom’s strategy and implementation which reached more than two thirds of Romanians and helped make the brand a national favourite again.

The campaign was designed to stir patriotic sentiment towards the brand by publicizing a spoof claim that it was being re-launched as “American Rom” by new US owners.

TV, outdoor and new US-themed packaging introduced into key retail chains created mass awareness of the news, whilst the company’s website and social media assets lent credibility to the change and registered consumers’ response. The move provoked a public outcry of patriotism and protectiveness towards Rom which found expression in online discussions, Facebook groups and a flash mob.

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After monitoring and fostering the debate online, the brand team launched a TV-led rapid “reveal” phase, reassuring audiences that Rom remained in Romanian hands and restoring its traditional wrapping which shares its colours with the country’s flag. Public relations and additional branded content were used to keep the conversation with consumers and the mass media going.

Post-campaign research showed sharp changes in key brand indicators, with Rom reclaiming its spot as the country’s preferred chocolate brand. The revival was achieved without increasing promotions in line with trends in the category.

Full shortlist information and further details of the Warc Prize are published over the page. Warc subscribers can read the winning case study and all the Prize entries at www.warc.com/prize. If you are not a subscriber, you can request a trial at any time by visiting www.warc.com/trial.

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About the Prize

- The Warc Prize for Innovation was free to enter and open to case studies featuring any country, sector, communications discipline and budget range.
- 70 entries from 13 different sectors were submitted, featuring innovation in channel use, technology, category insight, research and brand strategy.
- India was the most active single market, with 27 case studies of innovation, followed by the US (12), UK (8), New Zealand (4) and Australia (3).
- The most represented sectors were automotive with 12 innovation cases, followed by household and domestic (9), toiletries and cosmetics (8) and leisure and entertainment (8).
- About a third of all entries innovated on budgets of \$500k or less, including two of the six shortlisted finalists (Dettol, Operation Christmas).
- Entries used an average of 7.6 channels. Shortlisted entries used a higher number (8.7) and the winning Rom case had 12 main channels.
- Warc also runs the [Warc Prize for Asian Strategy](#) and the [Admap Prize](#) for essays on new thinking.



2012 Warc Prize for Innovation Shortlist

Visit www.warc.com/prize to see case studies and campaign videos in full.

American Rom (Romania) Prize Winner

Brand: Rom

Brand Owner: Kandia Dulce

Agency: BV McCann Erickson

FARC: Operation Christmas (Colombia) Runner-up

Brand Owner: Colombian Ministry of Defence

Agencies: Lowe SSP3, Lowe and Partners

Dettol: Messaging Interrupts, Utility Delights (China)

Brand: Dettol

Brand Owner: Reckitt Benckiser

Agency: Advocacy WOM, China

Febreze: Breathe Happy (USA)

Brand: Febreze

Brand Owner: Procter and Gamble

Agencies: Grey, MSL, SMG, PWW

Kilauan Emas: Breaking through the shame barrier and improving the lives of sceptical denture wearers (Malaysia)

Brand: Polident

Brand Owner: GlaxoSmithKline

Agencies: Grey Asia Pacific and Maxus

Promote Iceland: Inspired by Iceland (Iceland)

Brand: Promote Iceland

Brand Owner: Icelandic Government

Agency: The Brooklyn Brothers, Islenska

About Warc

Warc is the global provider of ideas and evidence to marketing people. Warc's premium online service, warc.com, includes more than 6,000 case studies and a huge resource of articles on new thinking and best practice across all areas of marketing. It has subscribers in over 100 countries and is a resource relied upon by agencies, brand owners and media groups.