



## Crafting Christmas: How John Lewis redefined the power of handmade



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It's that time of year again folks, so pull out your stocking, reach for that peppermint latte and get ready for the Christmas blitz to bring delicious design, amazing ads and terrible sweaters your way!

At Kihada Kreative we've been going Christmas crazy for the UK department store John Lewis, and their beautifully crafted holiday ad campaign "The Bear and the Hare". From its lovable and delightfully adorable furry forest characters to a story and specially recorded soundtrack from Lily Allen that will melt even the frostiest of icy hearts, every detail of this brilliant campaign has led it to be known as the "biggest advertising event of the year".



And it's not the first time for this popular British chain. Over the last few years John Lewis have cemented themselves in the hearts and minds of their consumers and extended their market all over the world, utilizing their now trade mark tear-jerker Christmas stories that know how to tug on the right heart strings. Struggling with a huge dive in consumer purchasing after the recession of the last decade, the retail store giant needed to pull itself away from the fate of other similar businesses of the time that couldn't survive the spending freeze.

So how did they do it? How does a giant corporate retail store win back its customers and convince them to part with their hard-earned cash in a time of economic drought and uncertainty?

As a branding and advertising firm, we know the value in having the right recipe to reach advertising success. The powerful potential of unique, clever marketing campaigns has to be helped out with high production values and savvy social media use. Our rule of thumb is that 10% of your budget should always be earmarked for marketing your product or brand, and cutting a portion of it into solid Social Media marketing means trackable success and easy sharing. But it all starts with one utterly brilliant idea, and the desire to put craftsmanship, expertise and real artistry into your project.



In this new age of celebrity cameos and flashy 3D graphics, it's easy to depend on CGI and templates, and forget the value of real hand built design. This old-school 2D animation already stands out from today's advertising crowd, but a sneak peek behind the scenes at their impressive and painstaking process tells the true story of this mammoth undertaking.

With the help of Disney 2D artists and animators, the creatives at BlinkInk and Hornet worked on developing realistic characters and bringing them to life using traditional animating techniques. After adding colour, every frame of each individual character's movements was printed onto wooden boards and laser cut to create a totally unique stop-motion art piece. Every single element of action in the whole 2-minute animation was photographed against amazingly detailed sets one at a time. The laser cut characters were replaced and moved just a fraction over and over, then put together flipbook style to create the illusion of real movements.



Those breathtaking sets were created by expert model maker John Lee, famous for his dazzling work on the film "Fantastic Mr Fox". Rather than opt for a CGI surround, the creators wanted to capture the raw, natural look of the model elements made by hand to complement the unrefined, natural look of the characters and their movements. Every gift, leaf, footprint, right down to the snowflakes on the hills were made by hand and placed with expert precision. The lighting is in-set, and creates real shadows and highlights created by lights hung from above. It's that detailed approach and hand crafted feel that made us fall in love with this ad, and we are certainly not alone.

With more YouTube hits in the first few days for the 2013 campaign than the previous year totaled, it's clear that this ad hit the spot for millions of consumers worldwide.

Raising the bar high with their \$7 million dollar budget, John Lewis hit design gold with this year's festive campaign, truly fulfilling their 2012 christmas slogan by "giving a little more love this Christmas". But our favourite part of this delightful holiday tale, is that it works as the perfect example of value in creative craftsmanship.

Our goal when creating a brand or an advertising campaign is to build something for our clients that has a worth beyond bringing in the big bucks. Having a team of experts with diverse roles and special skills means we can work wonders, and build campaigns that are hard to forget. We like to think that it's not all about having the flashiest CGI or matching the latest trends. A campaign like this needs to come from the heart, and what better way to capture the energy of something real than to build it with skill, thought, and a lot of love, with our own two hands.