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## **McDonald's Advertising Strategy**

### **The 'Lost Ring' Campaign**

#### **Introduction:**

In the ever-evolving landscape of advertising, understanding emerging trends and innovative approaches is crucial for marketers. One such groundbreaking campaign that caught the attention of both industry experts and consumers alike was McDonald's 'Lost Ring' campaign during the Beijing Olympic Games. This blog post aims to delve into the intricacies of McDonald's advertising strategy, specifically focusing on their use of Alternate Reality Gaming (ARG) as a promotion and advertising tool.

#### **Background:**

Before we dive into the 'Lost Ring' campaign, let's briefly explore the concept of Alternate Reality Gaming. ARG is an immersive storytelling experience that blurs the lines between the virtual and real world, engaging participants through various media platforms. It harnesses the power of web-enabled tools, such as social media, to create an interactive and captivating narrative.

#### **The Mystery Begins:**

McDonald's embarked on their 'Lost Ring' campaign as a multi-pronged marketing approach to leverage the excitement surrounding the Beijing Olympic Games. Collaborating with renowned game designer Jane McGonigal and digital agency AKQA, they devised a complex ARG that invited participants to join the quest for a fictional lost sport.

#### **The Story Unfolds:**

Through a series of carefully crafted clues, participants were led on a virtual treasure hunt, exploring online platforms, decoding puzzles, and interacting with both virtual and real-world elements. McDonald's effectively utilized ARG as an audience engagement tool, as players became emotionally invested in the unfolding story, eagerly sharing their experiences on social media platforms.

#### **The Secret Revealed:**

As the campaign reached its climax, McDonald's unveiled the true purpose behind 'The Lost Ring' campaign. It was not only a clever marketing ploy but also a platform to promote the Olympic Games themselves. By incorporating the Olympic spirit and showcasing lesser-known sports, McDonald's successfully aligned their brand with the event while captivating their target audience.

#### **The Results:**

The 'Lost Ring' campaign garnered significant attention from not only the participants but also bloggers and media outlets. The innovative and immersive nature of the ARG generated buzz and intrigue, effectively positioning McDonald's as a pioneer in utilizing web-enabled tools for marketing purposes. However, it's important to acknowledge that while ARGs can be a powerful advertising strategy, they also possess certain drawbacks, such as the potential for confusion among participants and the need for substantial resources and planning.

#### **Conclusion:**

In conclusion, McDonald's 'Lost Ring' campaign stands as a testament to the immense potential of Alternate Reality Gaming as a promotional and advertising tool. By embracing the emerging trends of web-enabled tools, they successfully engaged their target audience and created a memorable brand experience. However, it's crucial for marketers to carefully analyze the pros and cons of using ARGs, considering

factors such as campaign objectives, target audience, and available resources, to ensure an effective and impactful advertising strategy.

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