

ITV crowns WWF winner of inaugural Head First award

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The environmental organisation earns a £1m airtime prize through ITV's new advertising initiative, which shines a spotlight on mental wellbeing

During mental health awareness week, ITV announces that World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) has won its inaugural Head First award, winning 1 million pounds worth of advertising airtime in a new initiative that shines a spotlight on mental wellbeing.

The Head First award builds on ITV's hugely successful Britain Get Talking campaign, and asked the brands taking part to put mental health at the heart of a new campaign.

The shortlisted brands pitched their ideas in person, before the panel of judges chose WWF (Creative Agency: Uncommon, Media Agency: Merkle) as their winner.

The world's leading global environmental charity is set to showcase a campaign which encourages everyone to get their daily dose of nature. The advert will detail how getting outside has a positive effect on your wellbeing and mood, demonstrating that those connected to nature enhance their wellbeing as well as their sense of agency to support environmentally friendly actions.

ITV will additionally match-fund the four runners up in the competition - Harry's (Creative Agency: The Or, Media Agency: Goodstuff), Talk Club (Creative Agency: Made With & Ant Farm), Isuzu UK (Creative Agency: 438 Marketing, Media Agency:

TMWI) and Nando's (Creative Agency: New Commercial Arts, Media Agency: Zenith) - up to £250,000 each in airtime, with the final campaigns due on air in Q4 2024.

The award was judged by some of the biggest experts in the advertising industry, including Chair Sheila Mitchell CBE, former Marketing Director for Public Health England, who stated: "More than 70 UK brands, charity organisations and their agencies brought innovation and creativity to the critical issues of mental health and wellbeing. The judges therefore had a very hard task, as they were looking for a strong TV campaign supported by an extensive customer experience and a rigorous evidence base for the health intervention. Through this initiative ITV has brought a welcome focus to a wide range of mental health concerns."

The other judges include Poppy Jaman OBE, Founder and Executive Vice Chair, MindForward Alliance; Simon Gunning, CEO, CALM; Lindsey Clay, CEO, Thinkbox; Chris Birch, Executive Creative Director, VCCP; Maisie McCabe, UK Editor, Campaign; Kate Waters, Client Strategy & Planning Director, ITV; and Susie Braun, Social Purpose Director, ITV. The campaign was devised by Rachel Compton, Head of Commercial Marketing, ITV.

Tanya Steele CBE, CEO of WWF, said:

"Engaging with nature is proven to boost our mood, whether it's taking a walk through a local park, watching the birds out of your window, or even just listening to the sounds of nature wherever you are.

"That is why we are thrilled to win ITV's inaugural Head First competition. Building on ITV's incredible Britain Get Talking initiative, we want to help bring the

restorative power of nature to people across the UK.

“The evidence is clear - spending time in nature can reduce anxiety and improve our mood, as well as making us more likely to take action to protect the health of our planet.

“Quite simply, when we get back to nature, nature restores us. We can’t wait to get started on this campaign, combining ITV’s unparalleled reach into Britain’s homes with our scientific expertise to get people outside and connecting to nature.”

Rachel Compton, ITV’s Head of Commercial Marketing, said:

“This was a hotly contested final with so many evidence based ideas all aiming to encourage the nation to take positive and preventive action towards better mental health. We couldn’t be more pleased to announce WWF as our first Head First award winner. This campaign builds on ITV’s impactful social purpose initiatives, putting mental wellbeing at the heart of what we do.”

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