

New IBM

THE CHALLENGE

Under the leadership of CEO Arvind Krishna, IBM was at a point of inflection and primed for a change. In 2021 it was announced that IBM would soon spin off its managed IT infrastructure business into a wholly new company, simplifying the way forward for IBM. The newly formed Kyndryl company would eliminate areas of business inside IBM to further help the brand focus on core priorities.

In February 2022, after the Kyndryl spinoff, IBM launched its first brand campaign in nearly a decade to reposition a 110-year-old company into today's IBM: an agile company built in the spirit of collaboration and meant to celebrate creators. The campaign is "Let's Create."

THE RESULTS

To educate in the U.S., we focused on global leaders of the main businesses to secure exclusive stories with each that focused on how each executive in Cloud, AI, quantum and consulting envisioned the future of the new IBM after the Kyndryl spinoff. These stories made an impact in business and tech publications like Insider, Forbes, CRN, CNBC and Axios.

In Europe, we fine-tuned the message of new IBM to be focused primarily on the finance services industry – a key business audience that would continue to drive growth for IBM in a key turnaround year. We hosted sessions, panels and events that highlighted the need for increased regulation in financial services, more support for companies doing business in Europe, and that focused on the future, including quantum and cryptography. Through this initiative, we've briefed dozens of journalists and supported the sales mission of IBM Europe.

To inspire, we opened the hood for media and let them into the IBM organization, which was once a very guarded place. This action fully reinforced the new IBM mentality and included hosting Ina Fried at Axios for an HBO Special with Arvind Krishna.

We really took surprise to heart by supporting the annual conference Think, which for the first time in 2022 went on a global tour. With over 20 stops in global markets, we brought IBM directly to the markets that matter most. This enabled the teams to create bespoke experiences in local markets, including most recently a press conference in Tokyo announcing a slew of new innovations in our quantum portfolio. We also announced a partnership with Japan to manufacture the breakthrough 2NM chip for IBM.

In India, we offered one-of-a-kind experiences to local reporters to fly to the U.S. to see and experience our research and quantum labs. This unprecedented access gave them a chance to really see where most of the research and development for IBM's future technologies are taking place. The experience was very well-received by local media and resulted in a significant uptick in local coverage.

THE SOLVE

Weber Shandwick collaborated with IBM at the corporate level on a narrative to create messaging pillars, tactics and activations that enabled global markets to regionalize and elevate the work locally.

The overall goals:

- **EDUCATE:** Ensure clear and consistent messages from senior executives to external audiences, leading to increased key message pull-through.
- **INSPIRE:** Provide opportunities for media to tell rich stories about the future of IBM and its leadership, leading to positive engagement.
- **SURPRISE:** Engage media and general audiences by showing up in unique places with bold messages.

