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competition



TEAM 654

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The NFL plays a powerful role in American culture. It brings people together across countries, generations, and communities. While football's influence is unparalleled, the NFL's impact on youth health and wellness is far less visible to the casual fans who shape long-term perception and future loyalty.

Our research revealed a deeper tension. Casual fans care about young people and believe the NFL can make a difference. But skepticism and fragmented awareness towards the NFL make that belief difficult to sustain. Few people can name specific programs or recognize the impact in their own communities. Without visible proof or clear ways to get involved, goodwill often stops at awareness. Fans are not resistant; they are waiting for something actionable to believe in.

NFL Empower brings that impact into focus. This platform unites the league's youth programs, community partners, and real stories of mentorship under one clear narrative. It helps fans see how youth support shapes real outcomes and makes the NFL's role in youth wellness easier to understand and believe in.

Our SHOW UP campaign turns that belief into action. Storytelling builds credibility, while local experiences drive change by connecting fans directly with the programs and partners. As participation grows, emotional resonance strengthens, and casual support evolves into lasting loyalty. SHOW UP helps fans see the NFL's youth efforts as authentic and worth believing in, positioning the league as a trusted force that truly shows up for youth.

WHAT WE DID

709 NATIONAL SURVEY RESPONDENTS

40 FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

1.1K POP-UP RESEARCH INSIGHTS COLLECTED

50 U.S. STATES REPRESENTED

11 COUNTRIES REACHED GLOBALLY

Australia, Austria, Canada, France, Germany, Ireland, Mexico, South Africa, U.K., U.S.

PROBLEMS

POWERFUL BUT QUIET

The NFL is seen primarily as a source of entertainment, leaving impact stories overshadowed.¹ Fans often miss the full scope of the league's purpose-driven work, which gets lost in the spectacle of the game.²

COMMITTED BUT UNCLEAR

Even when fans know about the NFL's youth wellness programs, they don't know how to participate or support them.³ Awareness is not translating into action or measurable impact; fans need a clear way to connect with the league's youth wellness work.⁴

AUTHENTIC BUT FRAGMENTED

Without a single unifying platform, programs exist in silos. Their impact is difficult to observe, access, and measure — preventing the league from demonstrating its full impact and potential.

OPPORTUNITIES

READY TO LEAD

The NFL has unmatched reach among youth, families, and casual viewers alike, giving them the platform to inspire and mobilize the next generation.⁵ The NFL is uniquely positioned to lead.

READY TO UNIFY

After the "I Am Somebody" campaign, the NFL saw lifts in agreement with its dedication and commitment to making a positive impact on youth well-being.⁶ This proves the league can inspire audiences as long as its efforts are unified.

READY TO ACTIVATE

The NFL is the strongest brand in sports — trusted, visible, and culturally relevant.⁷ The league's combination of scale and influence gives it the unmatched ability to step up and lead a movement.

THE CASUAL FAN UNIVERSE

102.5 MILLION PEOPLE^{8;9}

Casual fans represent the majority of the NFL's audience and have the ability to shape league perception.¹⁰ While they are not yet avid fans, they are open to further engagement when football feels personally meaningful and relevant in their lives.¹¹

THE DISCONNECT

Even when fans know about the NFL's youth wellness programs, they don't know how to participate or support them. Awareness alone is not translating into action or measurable impact. Fans need a clear way to connect with the league's youth wellness work.

WHAT WE KNOW

TRUST IN THE NFL

60% of casual fans trust the league to use its platform to create positive change.¹²

“They're authentic... because the people behind it actually believe in it.
INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT¹³

IMPACT NEEDS VISIBILITY

80% of casual fans believe the NFL supports programs that make a difference in their communities.¹⁴

“Getting a franchise to come into their communities and run programs would get a huge response.
INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT¹⁵

LIMITED INVOLVEMENT

40% of surveyed fans are not involved in an NFL youth initiative.¹⁶

“It's just something that falls on deaf ears of the population that they're aiming this at.
INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT^{17;18}

THREE PATHS TO FANDOM

LEGACIES

37% OF FANS¹⁹

THEY ARE:

Fans whose interest in the NFL is inherited through family traditions and hometown pride.²⁰

THEY PRIORITIZE:

Following their team to uphold local and family traditions.²¹

THEY VALUE:

Authentic connections to programs and experiences in their city to see tangible impact.

THEY WANT:

Stories showing their team's local impact to feel proud and connected to their community.

CONNECTORS

26% OF FANS²²

THEY ARE:

Fans whose interest in the NFL is shared through experiences, cultural moments, and entertainment.²³

THEY PRIORITIZE:

Enjoying moments together with others to feel part of a shared experience.²⁴

THEY VALUE:

Experiences that connect them with friends, family, and community to feel part of meaningful moments.²⁵

THEY WANT:

Stories that feel social and relatable to connect with others and celebrate together.

SEEKERS

37% OF FANS²⁶

THEY ARE:

Fans whose interest in the NFL is chosen out of personal curiosity in the sport, players, and game narratives.²⁷

THEY PRIORITIZE:

Learning the game and following players to explore football on their own terms.²⁸

THEY VALUE:

Experiences that deepen understanding of the game and its real-world impact to connect with football and its initiatives.

THEY WANT:

Stories about players, legends, and the league's larger purpose to get personally invested and inspired.

OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

To build emotional connection and drive participation, the NFL must unify its youth wellness efforts under one clear and visible platform. This platform organizes existing programs, aligns partner missions, and offers fans a simple way to understand how football creates real impact in their communities.

CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVES

- 1 DRIVE INCREASED AWARENESS OF YOUTH WELLNESS IMPACT WORK**
- 2 LIFT BRAND PERCEPTION**
- 3 DRIVE ENGAGEMENT WITH YOUTH WELLNESS PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES**

| SEE IT

Establish a singular platform organizing the NFL's youth programs and partners into one clear identity so fans can easily recognize the league's role in youth wellness.

| FEEL IT

Translate awareness of youth initiatives into emotional connection by showing real people and outcomes demonstrating why this work matters beyond the game.

| GROW IT

Turn connection into participation by creating ways for fans to get involved, supported by ongoing storytelling that reinforces shared impact.

| PROVE IT

Build long-term credibility by consistently showing measurable progress and establishing how participation contributes to meaningful change.

UNIFIED VOICE FOR YOUTH WELLNESS



EMPOWER

A SHARED MISSION

One purpose connects the work of the NFL's youth programs and partners: helping young people build the confidence and support needed to reach their full potential.

A CONNECTIVE THREAD

NFL Empower positions the league's youth initiatives together under one clear identity. By connecting programs and partnerships within a single platform, the league creates a more cohesive path for communities and fans to understand how to support youth.

EMPOWERMENT IS THE OUTCOME

Previous campaigns like "I Am Somebody" and "I Am a Champion" illustrate what can happen when young people receive consistent support.²⁹ These moments depict the results of long-term investment in youth wellness.

DESIGNED TO DRIVE VISIBLE IMPACT

When initiatives are aligned through consistent communication, it becomes easier to recognize their influence. NFL Empower strengthens the league's ability to establish progress and build trust over time.

CAMPAIGN MANIFESTO

The future isn't guaranteed.

It's built right now — in moments most people never see.

**On practice fields.
In classrooms.
In after-school programs where kids aren't just looking to belong...**

They're looking for someone to show up.

In these moments, a single person can change everything for them.

Before a child can say, "*I am somebody*," they have to know they have somebody.

Each and every kid has something special inside them — a light they are born with.

But the potential can't grow and thrive in the dark.

**It takes someone to see it.
To believe it.
To commit to it.**

Everyday, the NFL is helping millions of kids in thousands of communities discover their light.

Yet much of the good that's happening remains unseen, and life-changing stories go untold.

That needs to change in order to fulfill on the NFL's vision for youth wellness.

**The momentum is building.
The need is real.**

It's time to create a visible force that empowers the next generation of kids.

And tell all the amazing stories about how the NFL is showing up for our future.

It's time to make a difference.

It's time to SHOW UP.



SHOW UP

SHOW UP

Before a young person can believe in their potential, someone must take action. Empowerment results from the consistent presence of players, mentors, teams, and communities. SHOW UP reorganizes the NFL's youth wellness work from isolated initiatives into one visible, shared movement. It gives casual fans a clear role in creating impact and connects everyday football moments to real youth development.

WHAT IT DOES

SHARES REAL STORIES

Bring authentic examples of mentorship and community to the forefront so fans can see how change happens.

HIGHLIGHTS YOUTH OUTCOMES

Focus on the growth, confidence, and opportunities created by investing in youth.

OPENS PATHWAYS TO ACT

Provide ways for fans to get involved in youth wellness initiatives.

WEAVES IMPACT INTO NFL CULTURE

Integrate youth wellness into moments fans already value, from team pride to shared viewing experiences.

UNITES EFFORTS UNDER ONE CAUSE

Align players, teams, partners, and programs around a common purpose.

POWERS COLLECTIVE PARTICIPATION

Transform individual acts into a national movement that encourages youth and mentor participation.

MEDIA STRATEGY

Spanning **September 2027 – July 2028**, our two-phase media strategy builds belief and inspires belonging.

Phase 1 unifies the NFL's youth programs under one platform: NFL Empower. Once fans understand the league's commitment to youth wellness, **Phase 2** invites communities to join a movement and **SHOW UP** for today's youth.

CAMPAIGN DMAs

Seven priority markets were selected based on the following criteria: strong NFL fan culture, alignment with key league moments, significant Hispanic population, and high potential for local community activation turnout.^{30;31}

Buffalo, NY
Chicago, IL
Dallas, TX
Houston, TX
Los Angeles, CA
Seattle, WA
Washington, D.C.

PHASE 1: BELIEVE

LAUNCHING NFL EMPOWER

NFL Empower is the primary home for the league's youth initiatives, serving to increase awareness of its impact. This phase gathers community stories and localizes NFL Empower's messaging. Phase 1 focuses on reducing skepticism and encouraging casual fans to associate the NFL with meaningful youth efforts.

Media executions center on short-form videos across CTV and YouTube. The NFL Empower microsite serves as the central hub for program information and participation pathways. Activations in Times Square command visibility at a high-impact cultural location. Youth wellness field days generate hands-on engagement, player involvement, and local media coverage.

PHASE 2: BELONG

THE SHOW UP MOVEMENT

The **SHOW UP** movement invites fans, players, and communities to take action for youth. Our Super Bowl ad launches the movement, which is then amplified across streaming and social platforms.

Long-form storytelling is present through the **SHOW UP** podcast, generating authentic content and deepening emotional connection to the league. All media directs fans to nfl.com/empower where they can learn how to get involved.

MEDIA RATIONALE

CTV & STREAMING

Casual fan viewership: Peacock (32%), Hulu (37%), Paramount Plus (31%), Amazon Prime Video (47%), ESPN+ (14%), and Netflix (62%).³²

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social channels provide daily touchpoints for fans to engage with youth wellness programs.

81% of casual fans use social media. Top platforms are: Facebook (61%), YouTube (53%), Instagram (38%), and TikTok (24%).³³

PODCASTS

Long form storytelling deepens casual fans' connection to players, legends, and the league itself. We leverage the NFL's existing partnership with iHeartMedia to create a space to bring these stories to life.

31% of casual fans listen to podcasts, and 59% of listeners choose podcasts that make them think.³⁴

IN-STADIUM

In-stadium activations reach casual fans who attend games. NFL Empower ribbon boards will be visible in the stadium and on game broadcasts, directing fans everywhere to visit the NFL Empower website.

EVENTS

Events provide local touchpoints for casual fans. Field day events invite kids to get active and casual fans to see NFL Empower's community impact. 95% of consumers trust a brand more after attending an event.⁴¹

NFL EMPOWER WEBSITE

An extension of nfl.com, this serves as a central hub that organizes the league's youth-based initiatives. It shares empowering stories and encourages fan involvement by featuring a leaderboard and interactive map.

TIMES SQUARE

Casual fans repeatedly cite mental health as the top issue they care about.^{35;36}

Holding the activation on World Mental Health Day will generate earned media by depicting NFL youth efforts as authentic and impactful.

Times Square averages over 230,000 daily visitors in October with a diverse audience of New Yorkers (50%), domestic travelers (33%), and international tourists (17%).^{37;38}

Over 250,000 daily Instagram posts feature the location, creating a cultural phenomenon driving nationwide PR.^{39;40}

MEDIA FLOWCHART & BUDGET

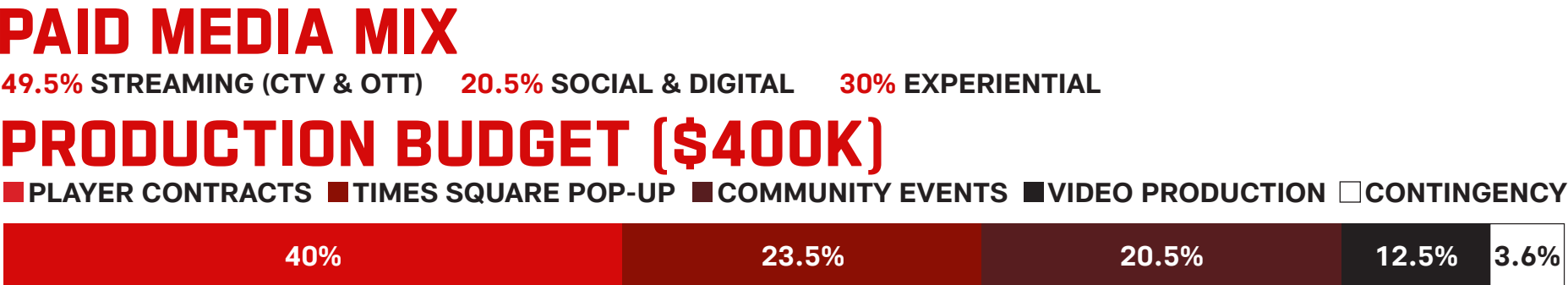
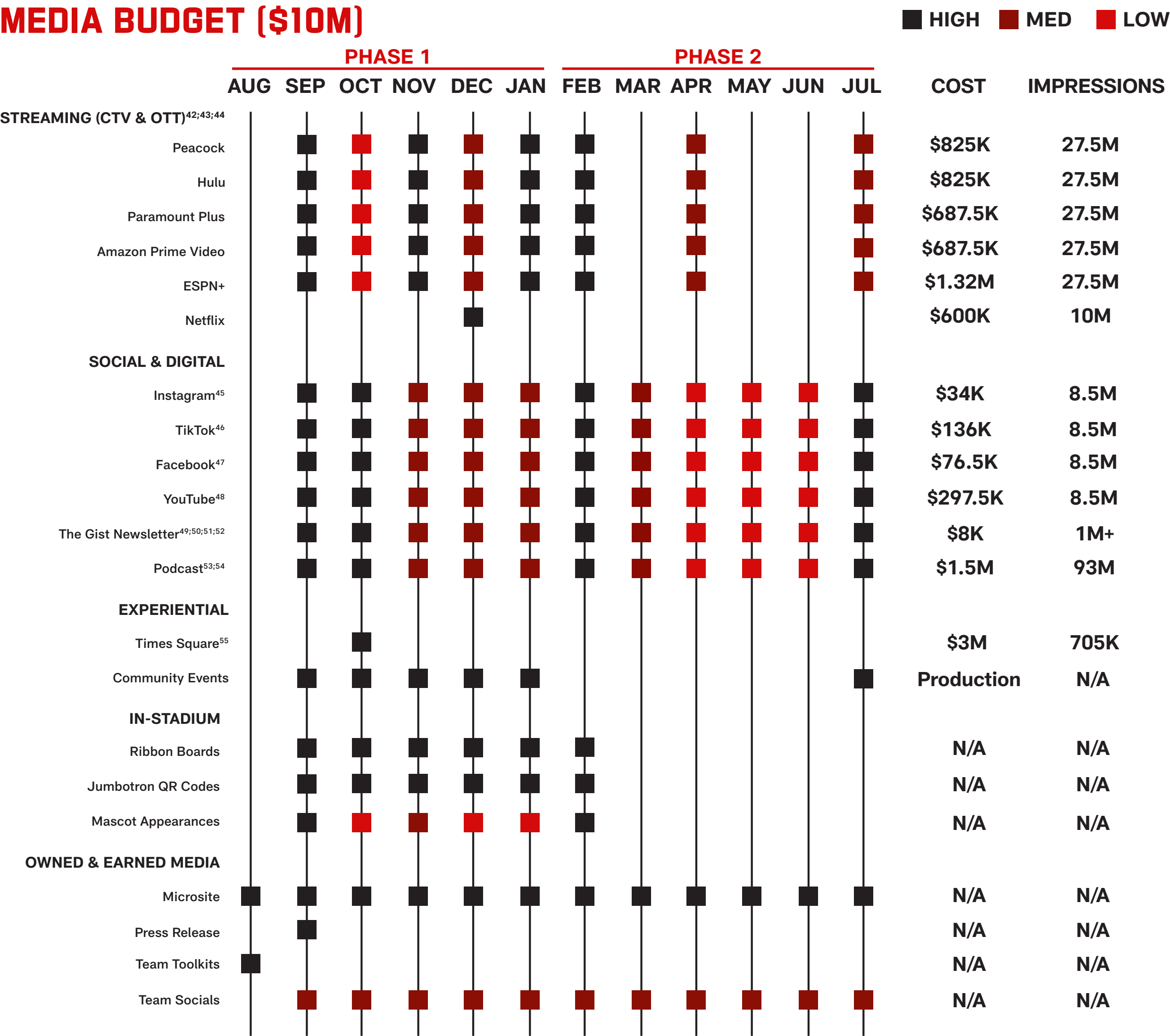
Our campaign invests \$10M in media to drive national awareness and participation, supported by a \$400K non-working media budget for production, events, player appearances, and content creation. Together, this funding powers a two-phase strategy designed to first build belief in the NFL’s youth impact and then activate fans to take part.

PHASE 1: BELIEVE

High-reach video across CTV and YouTube introduces NFL Empower through authentic youth stories. A Times Square takeover, paid social, and NFL Empower pop-up experiences create visibility and local engagement, while the website hub gives fans a clear place to learn and explore programs.

PHASE 2: BELONG

High-reach video across CTV and YouTube introduces NFL Empower through authentic youth stories. A Times Square takeover, paid social, and NFL Empower pop-up experiences create visibility and local engagement, while the website hub gives fans a clear place to learn and explore programs.



MEASUREMENT & KPIs

Our approach for evaluating the success of this campaign is to use benchmarks the NFL is currently tracking and reporting.

	AWARENESS OF IMPACT	PERCEPTION OF KEY ATTRIBUTES	ENGAGEMENT WITH RESOURCES
NFL BRAND PERFORMANCE	Increase lift relevancy as a league. KPI: Net % Positive - % Negative Goal: +2 Points vs. 2024	Growth in the number of stories deployed in the NFL Ecosystem. KPI: Social Posts Goal: +20% vs. Current Level	Increase agreement with key attributes. KPI: Growth Over 5 Years Goal: +35% Unifying and +29% Relevant
NFL EMPOWER PLATFORM	Establish a central hub for youth wellness. KPI: Aided Awareness % Goal: Exceed NFL Play 60 (>40%)	Growth in the NFL's commitment to kids. KPI: % Awareness of Initiatives Goal: Exceed Cause Initiative (+20% lift)	Take action to learn more and get involved with initiatives. KPI: Website Unique Visitors Goal: +25% vs. NFL Innovation Site
SHOW UP CAMPAIGN	Exceeds "I Am Somebody" emotional attribute. KPI: % Attribute Goal: 50% Positive	Improve positive attitude for NFL as a league. KPI: % Lift Avidity Goal: +20%	Increase participation on social channels and team events. KPI: % Lift vs. NFL norm Goal: +20% on Socials and +10% In-Person