

Culture Pop

Lil Nas X:

Unearthing and embracing subcultures to authentically **reflect and connect.**

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The world's largest eSport, **League of Legends** (by Riot Games), is in the throws of the 2022 World Championship – a one-month tournament between teams of global superstars you've probably never heard of, and this year, including one you've definitely heard of, **Lil Nas X**.

To promote eSports' largest event, Lil Nas X(ecutive) became the honorary League of Legends 'President' along with releasing the tournament's anthem 'STAR WALKIN'.

'SUPER DOPE'

Lil Nas X Drops New Single 'Star Walkin' for League of Legends Tourney

Lil Nas X and K'Sante collab in League of Legends is perfect authentic representation

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And it comes at a moment in time where the brand
and industry broadly needs real change.

Riot Games agrees to pay \$100 million in settlement of class-action gender discrimination lawsuit

By Shannon Liao

Updated December 28, 2021 at 2:24 p.m. EST | Published December 27, 2021 at 10:02 p.m. EST



League of Legends developers, Riot Games, along with many other studios have a shameful history of sexism, racism homophobia and toxicity that's non-reflective of the modern diverse community the industry should be known for.

Activision Blizzard is once again being sued for sexual harassment

Amanda Silberling @asilbwrites / 6:17 AM GMT+10 • October 14, 2022

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A tale of colliding reflective subcultures to forge a **new, representative message of inclusion**

League of Legends (Gaming)

- 117 Million active players
- 800,000 average World Championship viewership
- Successful Netflix Original series, 'Arcane'
- \$USD 1.75 Billion in annual revenue
- A history of controversy, with an appalling record of a sexist, racist and homophobic workplace culture



Lil Nas X (Hip Hop)

- Generation and culture defining
- 15x Platinum on debut single 'Old Town Road'
- 2x Grammys
- 42 Million monthly listeners on Spotify with 150+ Million streams
- African American, openly gay and proudly represents the LGBTQIA+ community



“ ”

Being able to reach people and achieve a specific level of representation that's **going to speak to certain people and allow them to be seen** in the content that we're making, especially **coming from me as a queer person, it's just energizing and wonderful to feel empowered to tell those stories** and allow ourselves to weave those stories into the overarching fabric of League of Legends as a whole.

- Lil Nas X



Lil Nas X's involvement is a line in the sand that the **age of the 'stereotypical gamer' is over.**

The inclusion of Lil Nas X bridges the rift between the still largely fresh and unknown subculture surrounding eSports and the mainstream.

And in doing so begins to overcome the stigma of what modern 'gaming' and 'gamers' look like.

Lil Nas X's feature is hopefully a defining moment for removing the 'cis young men's club' toxic image that's been plaguing the industry since its foundation – instead promoting a more inclusive image that's representative of a thriving gaming subculture.



“ ”

Women are just as likely as men to play video games, and it is a passion that spans generations: the average gamer is between 35-44, while 15% of gamers are 55 or older. There are 33 million gamers with disabilities in the US, and within the next decade, it is estimated that people of colour will make up the majority of younger gamers.

- Washington Post

“ ”

I actually thought it was super dope that a gaming company that's so big wanted to work with me. As I said, **I, for whatever reason, have that huge gamer fan base, and they're going up for this**, so...Yeah. Sick.”

- Lil Nas X



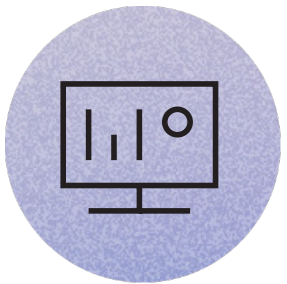
The move unearths key learnings for brands **in embracing and reflecting their customers' diverse interests.**



Builds an image of a more interesting, layered and multi-faceted brand



Breaks down barriers with fringe audiences by tapping into their world – conjuring pride in their interests



Provides opportunities to show up and connect with a diverse range of people in different and distinct ways



Escapes the expected provided by typical ambassadors and, when done genuinely, can reignite a brand's values

Brand Example in Action: Medibank 'Live Better'

Medibank's 'Live Better' campaign celebrates their member's unique interests and subcultures as a pillar of mindfulness, building an image of dynamism and joy in embracing inclusion and diversity.

medibank
Live Better



The background of the entire image is a dark, deep blue. Overlaid on this are several pieces of white, textured material that look like ice or paper. One large piece is in the upper left, another in the upper right, and a very large, prominent one in the lower right. These pieces have jagged, irregular edges, suggesting they are floating or breaking apart. The text 'Stay ahead of change' is centered over the middle of the image, with the words 'Stay ahead' on one line and 'of change' on a second line below it. The text is white and in a serif font. In the bottom left corner, the logo 'thelab' is written in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font. In the bottom right corner, there is a line of small white text that reads 'Get in touch to learn more: info@thelabstrategy.com'.

Stay ahead of change

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