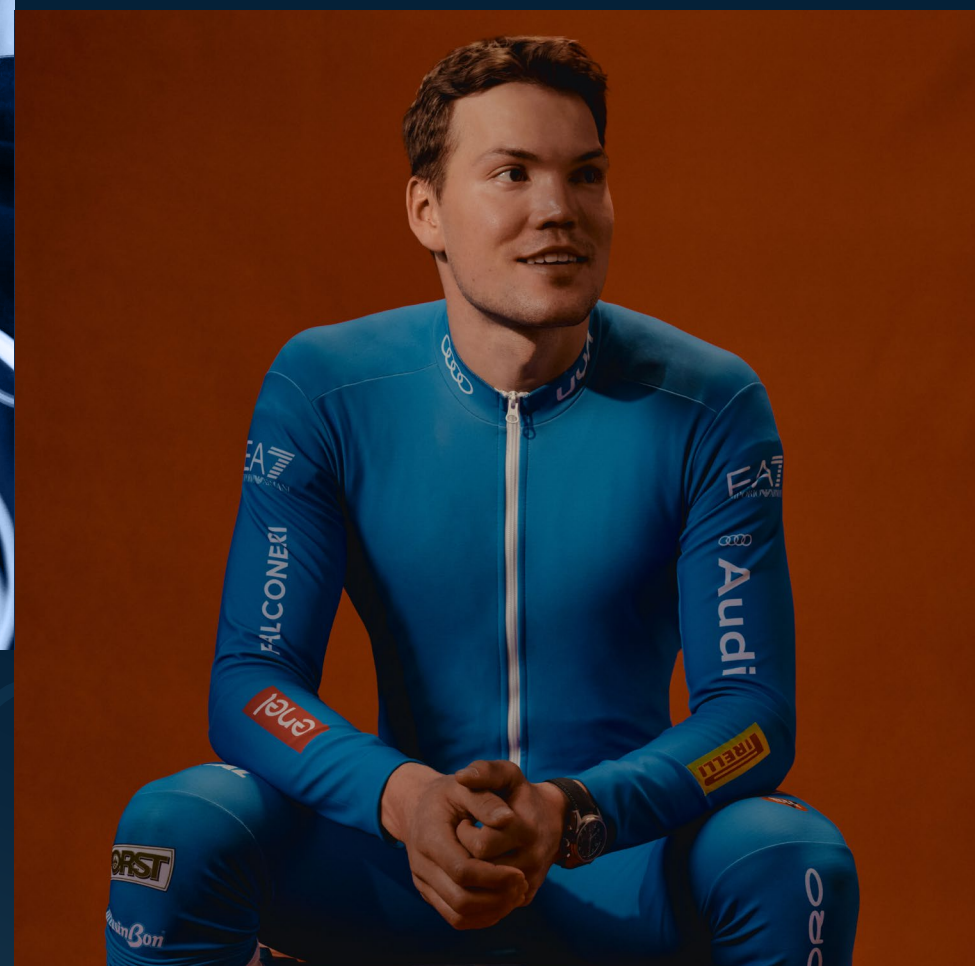


October 2025 – March 2026



ROAD TO THE GAMES

MILANO CORTINA BRAND IMPACT REPORT



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INTRO



**This is why Road to the Games is essential:
it is good for brands, good for the IOC, good for
athletes, good for sports, good for fans, and
good for business – a true win-win all around.**

**To our colleagues in the
IOC and Olympic Movement,
WFSGI members, and
the wider sporting goods
community, I'm delighted to
share with you the second
edition of our Road to the
Games Athlete Storytelling
project results from the
Olympic Winter Games
Milano Cortina 2026.**

Building on the success of the Road to the Games Paris Pilot, this Athlete Storytelling project has done something rare in our industry: it has changed the conversation – not incrementally, but fundamentally. It has shifted us from a world where sporting goods brands went quiet at the very moment athletes needed them most, to a new model where we can collectively amplify athletes' journeys before, during and after the Games, in a way that protects the integrity of the Games while unleashing authentic, engaging, and athlete-first storytelling.

Before this ground-breaking project, many WFSGI members, including the top brands in sports, and others across the sporting goods industry were re-evaluating support for Olympic sports and athletes and the redirection of budgets elsewhere. They could not justify the investment in athletes, and NOCs, National Federations, and International Federations that they could not promote and celebrate when those sports and athletes needed them most.

The Road to the Games has been the bold step change that reversed that trend. Thanks to the IOC's vision, ambition and commitment to sports and athletes supporting this change, the WFSGI Athlete Storytelling project now provides the flexibility the sporting goods industry needs to keep investing in Olympic athletes and teams, all while staying within clear, non-commercial guardrails.

The evidence is already compelling. The Road to Paris pilot united 17 brands, celebrating **4,072 athletes** across **125 countries**, generating **3.05 billion total engagements**. Milano Cortina reinforced the stakes.

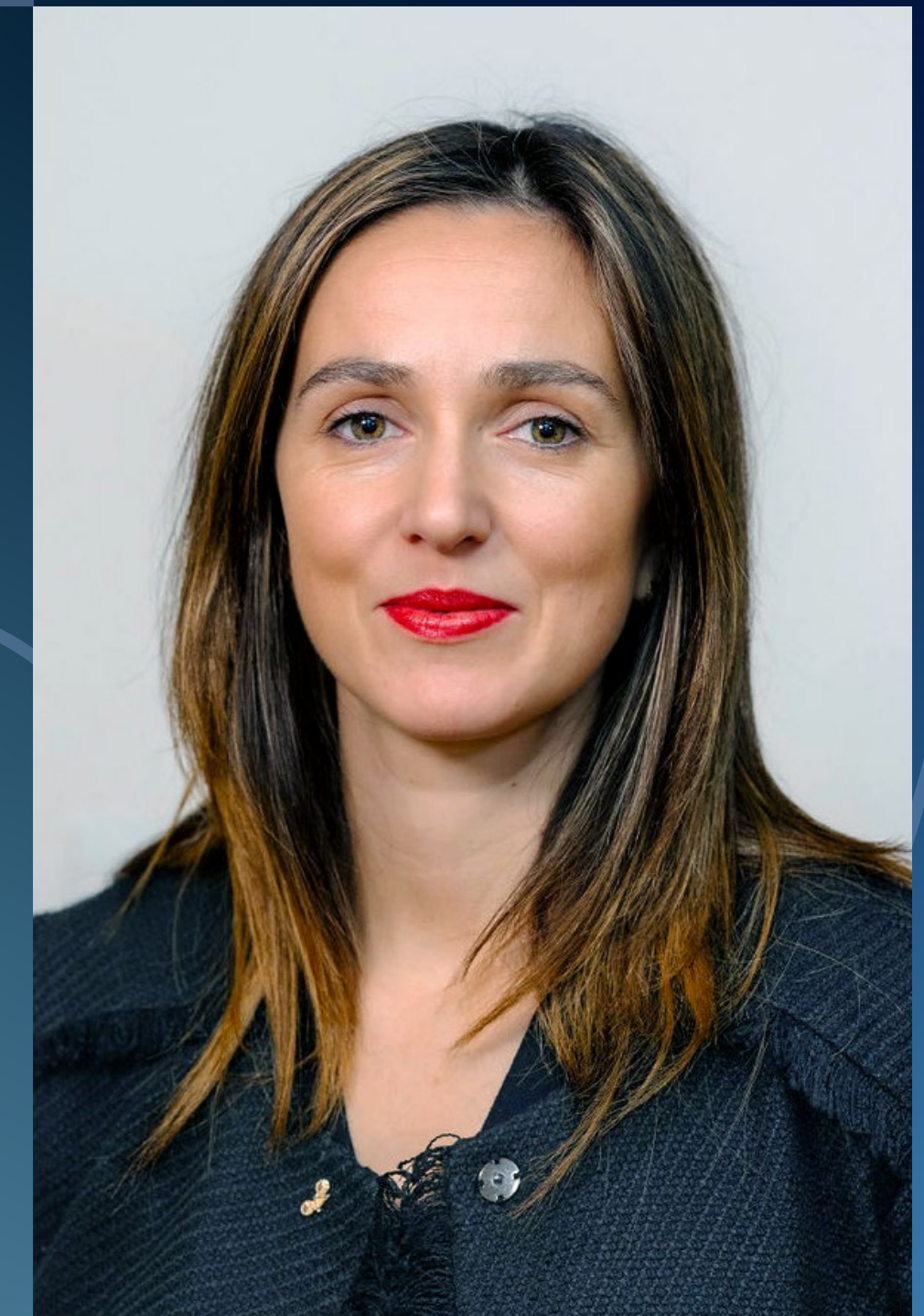
Across the Winter Games, 26 WFSGI member brands participated in the project ensuring visibility for 1,719 athletes across 44 countries.

This is why Road to the Games is essential: it is good for brands, good for the IOC, good for athletes, good for sports, good for fans, and good for business – a true win-win all around.

But we have only begun to explore what greater collaboration between our organisations could mean. With Road to the Games, we have a renewed opportunity to celebrate the athletes we supported 365 days a year and give them, their sports, and the Games the profile they deserve. But our organisations are also aligned on the importance of ensuring that sport remains relevant to that critical next generation. And, as we move towards the Olympic Games LA28, we hope to be able to work together to ensure that we grow sport, movement, and physical activity, particularly amongst youth.



Emma Zwiebler
WFSGI CEO





This Athlete Storytelling Framework now makes it possible for participating members to show up for athletes when they need us most.

As WFSGI Co-Chairs, we are proud to introduce this latest Road to the Games report from Milano Cortina documenting another incredible milestone in athlete storytelling and fan engagement in one of the biggest sporting events of 2026.

It documents a turning point in how the sporting goods industry engages with the Olympic Movement: a shift from silence to authentic, powerful and athlete-centred storytelling that drives relevance, reach, and renewed investment for all, as well as joy and excitement for billions of fans around the world.

Our industry has always believed that the Olympic Movement and the global sporting goods industry have a shared mission, vision, and dream to change the world through sport. But the period before the Road to the Games Athlete Storytelling project challenged our ability to motivate, innovate, encourage, and support our Olympic athletes at each stage of their journey. As a result, many industry players were forced to pull back spend and focus on other sporting events, running counter to our brands' ambitions to serve athletes in the best possible ways.

The Road to the Games Athlete Storytelling project has fundamentally flipped that narrative by providing structured flexibility through campaigns that are compelling, authentic and non-commercial – focused on the athlete, not the product.

This has allowed all parties to achieve our shared objectives by putting the athletes and sport at the centre.

This Athlete Storytelling Framework now makes it possible for participating members to show up for athletes when they need us most, staying within clear, non-commercial guardrails and with respect for Olympic principles. Now brands don't just participate; they invest. And critically, they reinvest.

We believe we are only at the start of an incredibly positive era of collaboration and look forward to working with the IOC over the coming years to put in place an even more impactful version for LA28 and beyond. This will help support a strong, successful and united future for the Olympic Movement as we grow the popularity and relevance of the Games for the next generation together.

It is a rare and brave initiative that aligns incentives across stakeholders – it is good for athletes, good for the IOC, good for WFSGI members, and good for the fans and future Olympians who are inspired by the incredible storytelling that comes from the industry that moves the world. Sports demands nothing less.

Jorge Casimiro
WFSGI Co-Chair

Dave Wheeler
WFSGI Co-Chair



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report outlines the key findings collectively of all brands in the Road to Milano Cortina 2026 Athlete Storytelling project.

The Road to Milano Cortina Athlete Storytelling project celebrated and raised athletes and NOC/NPC teams' profiles and stories on a global level before, during and after the Olympic Winter Games Milano Cortina 2026, building on the work already prepared.

06

While this report is primarily focused on Olympic stakeholders, Paralympic athletes and NPC teams have also been included where possible. Owing to the later signing of the extension with IPC, the data on Paralympic athletes and NPC teams is included in a separate section.

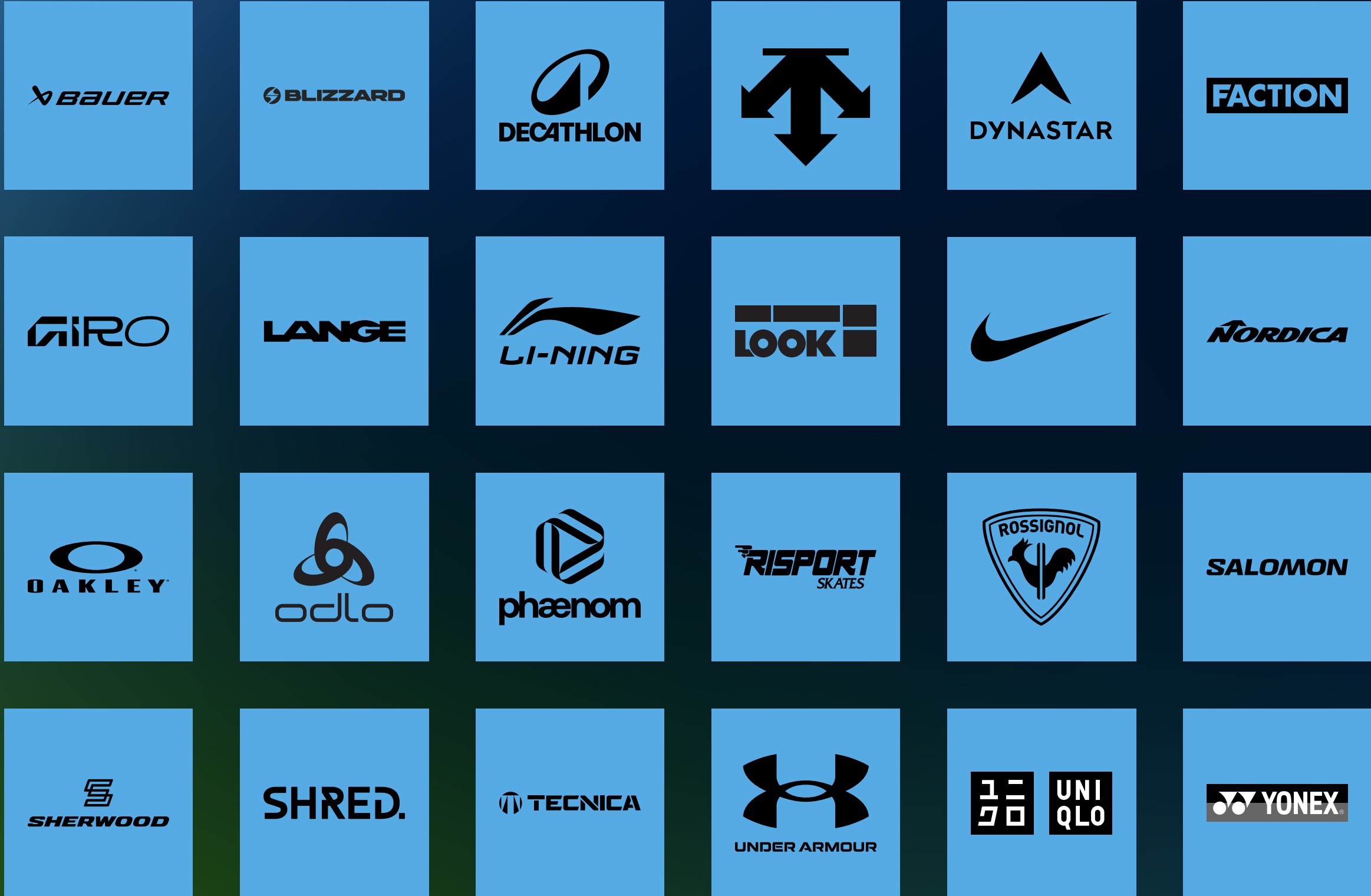
Eligible global sports brands supported sponsored athletes and NOC/NPC teams to narrate their journey to the Games, to help increase the engagement with and relevance of the Olympic and Paralympic brand reaching out beyond the Olympic and Paralympic Families to new audiences, particularly with younger generations (Young Millennials, Gen. Z and Gen. Alpha). Brands also supported in driving greater awareness of Olympic- and Paralympic-owned channels, continued to support the expanded NOC Uniform Support Programme, and continued to explore additional sponsorship of NOC/NPCs and athletes.

This benefitted athletes, NOC/NPC teams, the Olympic and Paralympic Movements, and brands delivering a win-win-win for all involved.

The eligible brands benefitted from increased flexibility when using and promoting their sponsored athletes' and NOC/NPC teams' images through social media campaigns in connection with their qualification for and/or participation in the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

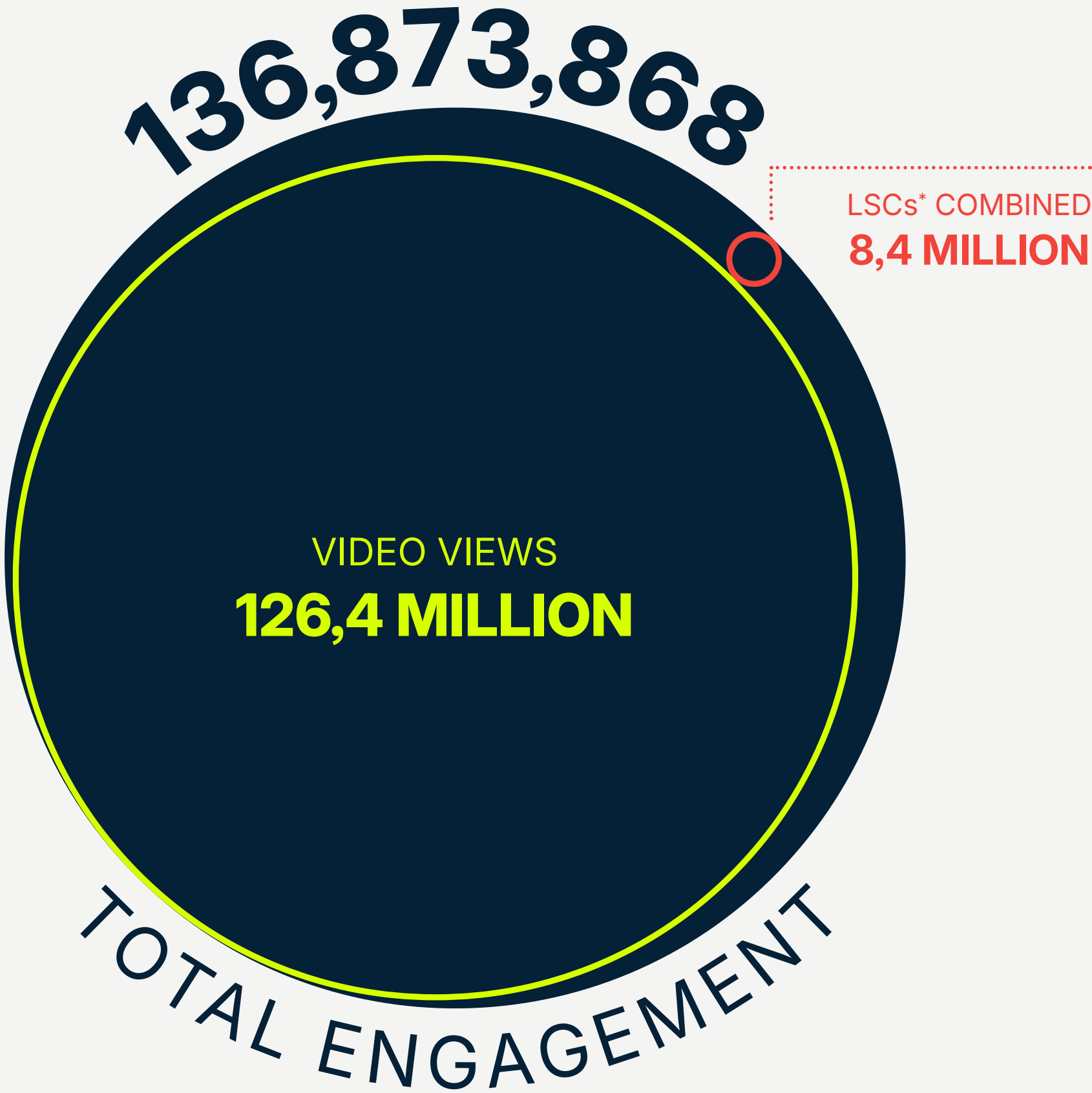
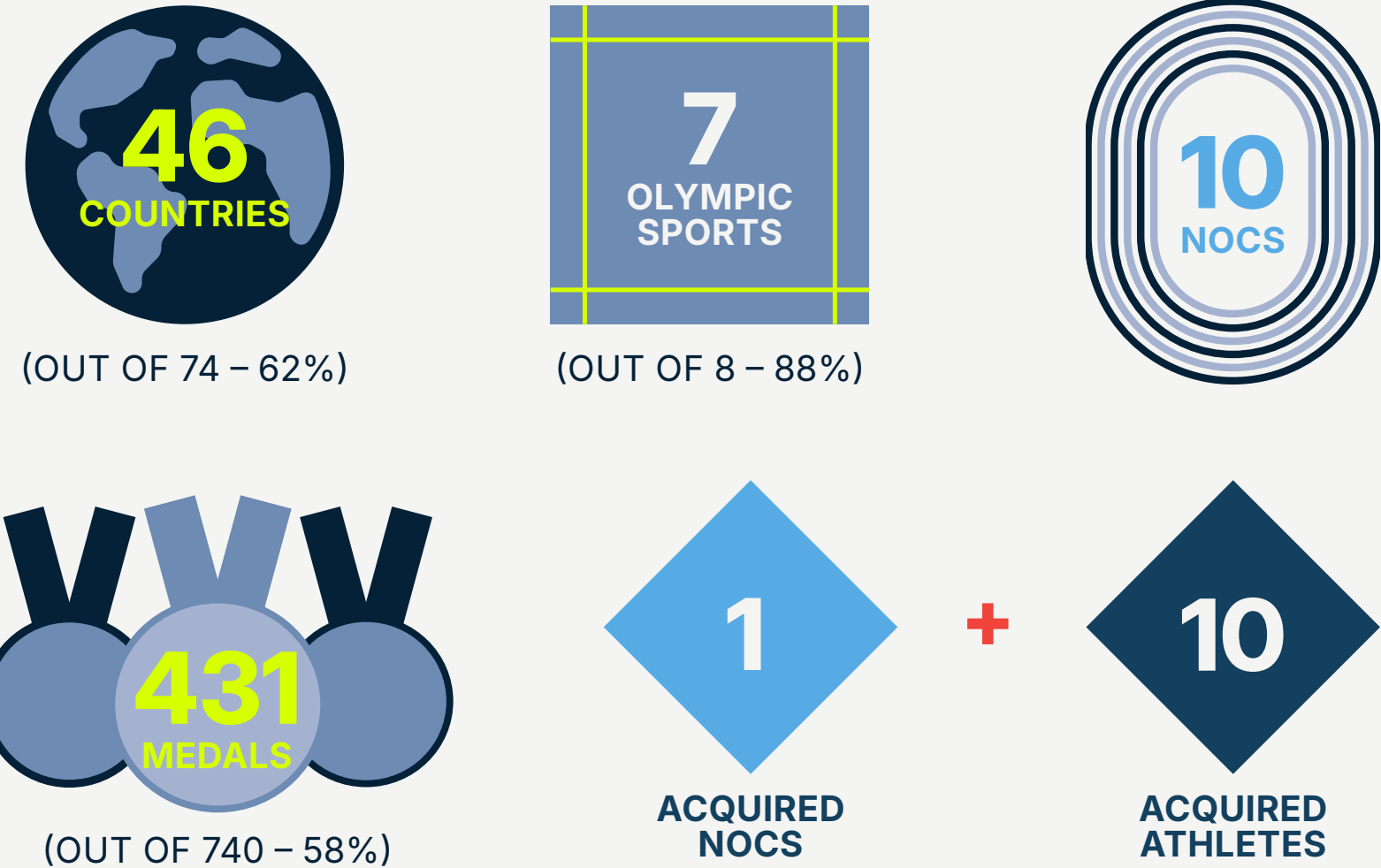
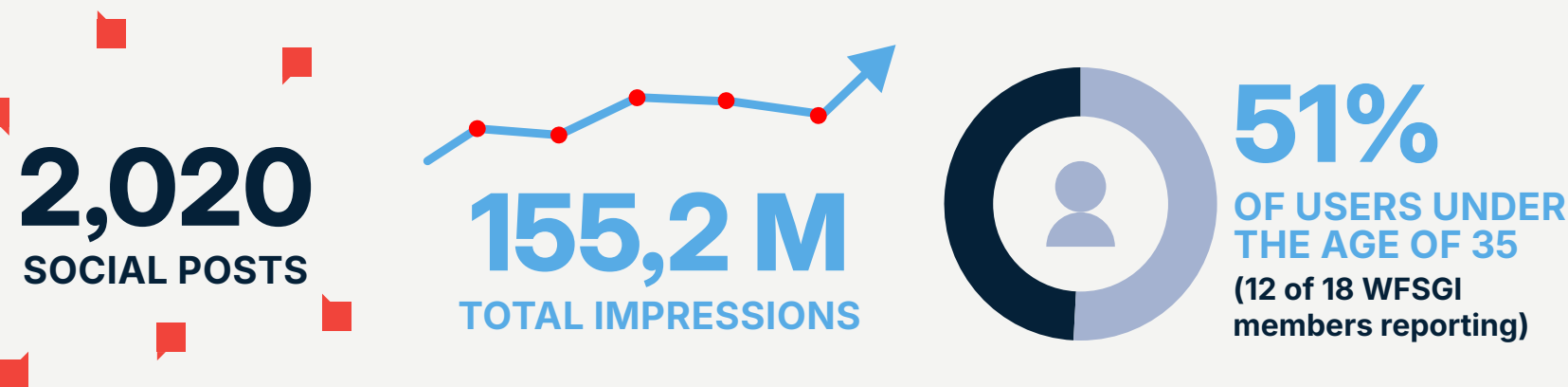
26 individual brands participated in this project, comprising of 18 WFSGI Members, and through the use of non-commercial posts featuring Olympic and Paralympic athletes, brands celebrated the stories of those athletes that they individually sponsor like never before.

The following companies participated in the project:



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

While this project was digital-led, both digital and physical channels were activated for this project. The high-level results of the digital activations can be seen in the following graphic:¹



In this report you will find further details of the results mentioned here as well as sections dedicated to brand campaigns, the athlete testimonials, and the impact of missed opportunities. Though this report contains the factual results of the Road to Milano Cortina Athlete Storytelling project, WFSGI has also encouraged the brands and athletes to speak in their own words, to give the reader a better understanding of the industry and their sponsored athlete perspective.

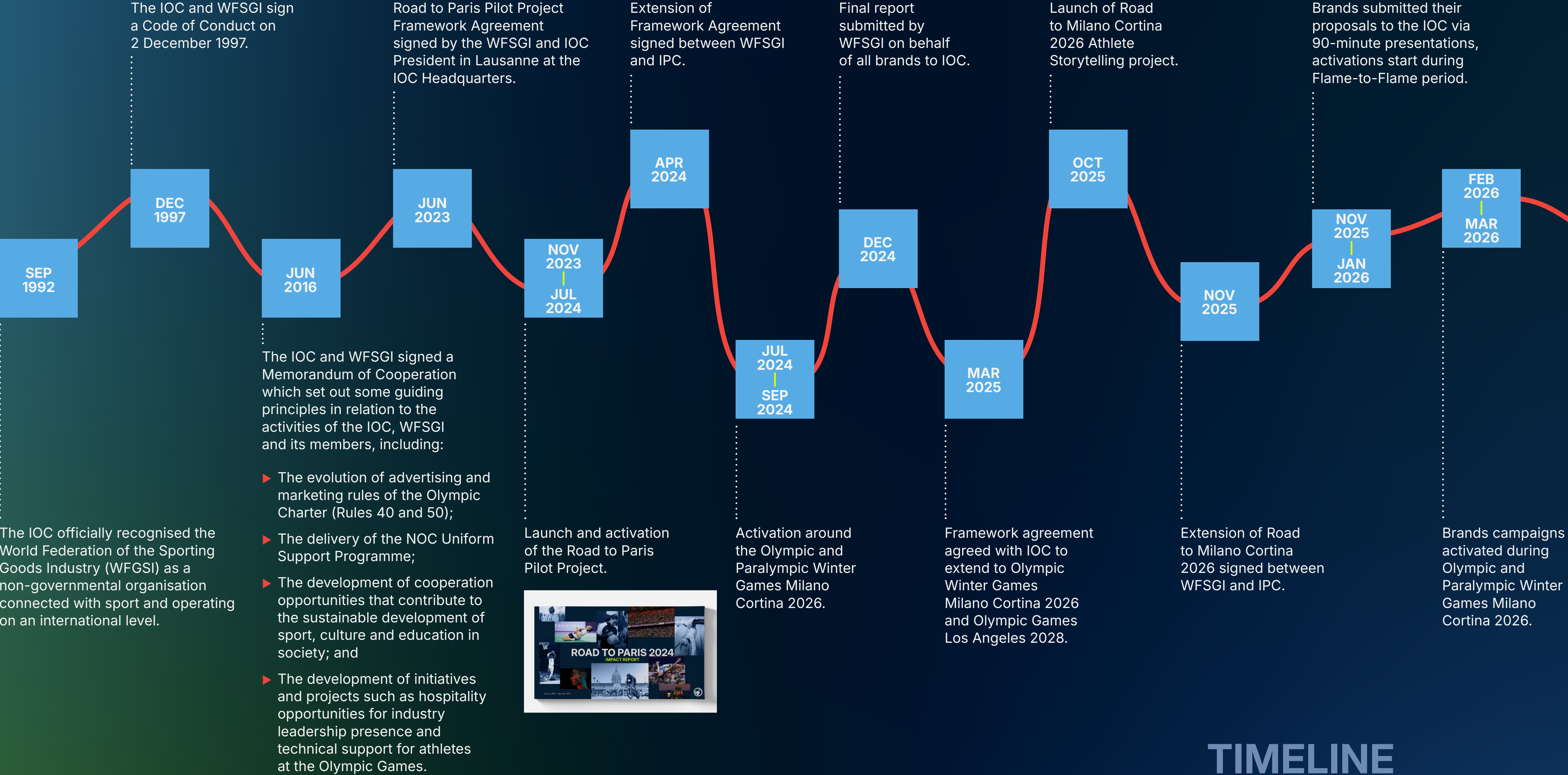
These results could not have been achieved without the partnership of the IOC TMS leadership and working teams, the IPC Leadership, and the brand teams who have been involved. The WFSGI is proud to have played a role bringing these entities together and helping to facilitate this work which we hope will set the baseline for a new approach to working with the sporting goods industry to promote Olympic and Paralympic athletes, teams, and the Olympic and Paralympic values on the road to future editions of the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

*Likes, Shares and Comments

¹ This project achieved 137 million engagements over the course of November 2025 – March 2026 (as defined by Likes, Shares, Comments Combined and Video Views).



OVERVIEW



Role of the WFSGI

The WFSGI team played a critical role in supporting the brand teams throughout the project. From the very beginning, the WFSGI was tasked with providing all brands the support they needed to onboard to the project, submit their materials to the IOC, and fully activate their athlete storytelling campaigns. Brands were provided with a full-time resource from the WFSGI to ask questions and help them prepare materials for IOC review, as well as servicing throughout the activation phase of the project, ensuring timely responses and additional information whenever it was needed.

A key role of the WFSGI was additionally to support the IOC's work around issue-resolution both before and during the Games, whether related to Rule 40 or to Road to Milano Cortina activities of the brands. This allowed the WFSGI to act as a liaison between the IOC and brands, resulting in smoother discussions and quick results when a takedown was required. The WFSGI presence on the ground in Milano Cortina also facilitated introductions between brands and IOC staff, as well as access to brand houses when requests were made.

Finally, this report has been prepared by the WFSGI on behalf of all brands, ensuring one single source of reporting for the IOC and collating all materials into one document.

Benefits for the Olympic Movement

Increased profile of Olympic athletes, teams and Games

Eligible global sports brands supported sponsored athletes and NOC teams to narrate their journey to and through the Games, raising their profile which benefitted the athletes, NOC teams, the Olympic Games, and the brands, delivering a win-win for all involved.

Increased Olympic and Paralympic brand exposure with the next generation

The brands' storytelling drove engagement with and relevance of the Olympic brand with new audiences, reaching out beyond the Olympic Family and particularly to the younger generations (Young Millennials, Gen. Z and Gen. Alpha). Brands also supported in driving greater awareness of Olympic-owned channels.

Expanded Athlete and NOC Uniform Support Programme

Brands committed to continuing to deliver the NOC Uniform Support Programme for the Olympic Winter Games Milano Cortina 2026, with 12 NOCs who benefitted. This programme was launched in 2016 to assist NOCs and athletes without sponsors, by providing them with outfits that meet the IF technical requirements and comply with Rule 50. This programme was additionally expanded to the Paralympic Games and eligible NPCs and athletes for the first time during Milano Cortina 2026, and included 11 NPCs in Milano Cortina.

Continued sponsorship

Brands agree to continue exploring opportunities to sponsor athletes and NOC teams, with a further commitment to promoting such sponsored athletes and NOC teams during the Flame-to-Flame period through the brands' digital platforms.



Benefits for the sporting goods industry

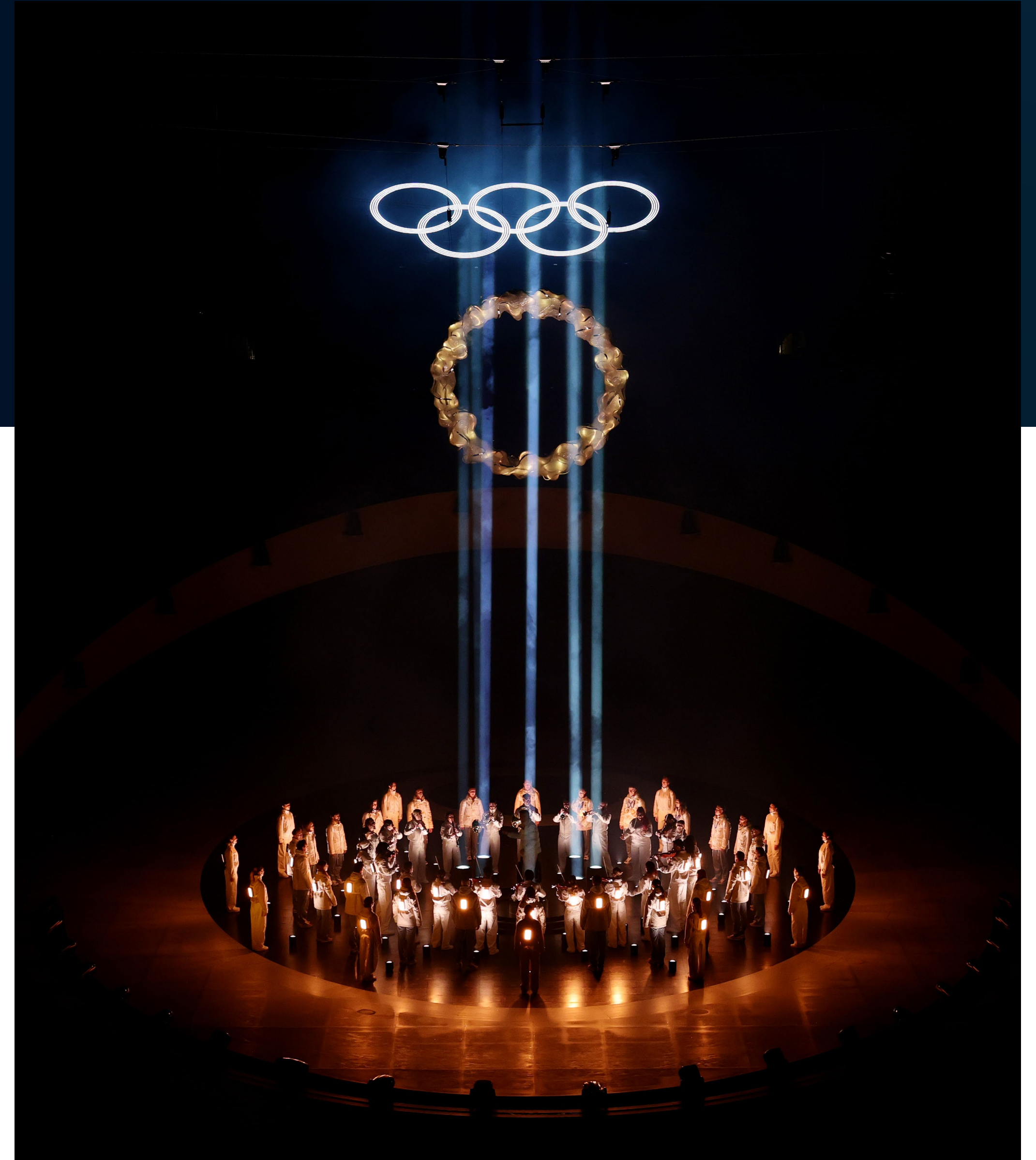
The eligible brands benefitted from increased flexibility when using and promoting their sponsored athletes' and NOC teams' images through social media campaigns in connection with their qualification for and/or participation in the Olympic Games.

What could the eligible brands do?

- ▶ use official Olympic still images of their sponsored athlete/NOC team at the Olympic Winter Games Milano Cortina 2026 as part of the congratulatory advertising on permitted digital channels. These images featured (on an incidental basis only – i.e. in the background) the Olympic symbol and/or Milano Cortina 2026 emblem;
- ▶ use official Olympic moving images of their sponsored athlete/NOC team from participation in past editions of the Olympic Games;
- ▶ use Olympic-related hashtags in their digital activations ([#MilanoCortina2026](#), [#RoadtoMilanoCortina2026](#), [#OlympicQualifiers](#), [#Olympics](#), [#Olympian](#) and [#Team\[NOC\]](#)) and tag Olympic handles (e.g. [@olympics](#)), with the benefit of driving traffic to IOC channels; and
- ▶ use the wordmarks "Olympic", "Olympian", "Olympic Games" and "Milano Cortina 2026" for editorial purposes only (e.g. in the narration of a story about a sponsored athlete's preparation for the Olympic Winter Games Milano Cortina 2026).

What can the eligible brands NOT do?²

- ▶ use the Olympic symbol or Milano Cortina 2026 emblem other than on an incidental basis as permitted above (i.e. not standalone or giving the marks any overt focus);
- ▶ use the Milano Cortina 2026 mascot or pictograms, or historical marks of the Olympic Games, or refer to the name of past editions of the Olympic Games (except when doing so for editorial purposes);
- ▶ focus on products when using the rights granted above – i.e. any visible product must be integrated authentically, such as being worn by athletes/protagonists in the story rather than being an overt message directing consumers to purchase; or
- ▶ explicitly refer or link to products (e.g. no special feature and no tagging) or to the brands' e-commerce stores.



The Road to Milano Cortina 2026 Athlete Storytelling project celebrated and raised athletes/NOC teams' profiles and stories on a global level both before, during and after the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games Milano Cortina 2026. You can see in the graphic below that Milano Cortina 2026 grew the Olympic and Paralympic awareness and popularity online, and we believe that Road to Milano Cortina helped to contribute to that awareness, along with other projects of the IOC and Milano Cortina 2026 OCOG.



Permitted Channels

Brands could activate these new opportunities on the following channels:

1. Digital

- a. Social media channels (where brands are active) global, sport, and local channels covering paid and organic content.
- b. Newsletters
- c. Push notifications (mobile)
- d. Website

2. PR (e.g. press interviews)

Only where interview is talking about the athlete's story, and not combined with product-focused content (e.g. commentary on the performance of/assistance from a particular shoe).

3. Brand events involving athletes/teams

(e.g. with media, consumers, customers/retailers, signing sessions etc.) including those taking place at a Participating Member Brand's "brand house" in Paris – but any brand event must link sufficiently to the storytelling of an athlete and cannot be used to promote/focus on/feature a product.

4. Additional below the line

Retail stores with a focus on storytelling.

³ Numbers represent search interest relative to the highest point on the chart for the given region and time. A value of 100 is the peak popularity for the term. A value of 50 means that the term is half as popular. A score of 0 means there was not enough data for this term.

Eligibility criteria for the Road to Milano Cortina 2026 Athlete Storytelling project

- ▶ be a full WFSGI member; and
- ▶ have a multi-year sponsorship contract with an NOC continuously since at least 1 January 2023; and/or
- ▶ be involved in the NOC Uniform Support Programme – at least since for the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022; and/or
- ▶ have been an official sponsor of the OCOG since the Olympic Games Rio 2016; and/or
- ▶ have multi-year sponsorship contracts with a minimum of 10 Olympic winter sport athletes from more than two countries from at least January 2024.

13

How many brands participated in the Athlete Storytelling project?

26 global sporting goods companies took part in the Road to Milano Cortina, representing 18 WFSGI member organisations. They all fulfilled the above eligibility criteria. The participating WFSGI-member companies were:

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| ▶ adidas | ▶ Lange | ▶ Rossignol |
| ▶ Atomic | ▶ Li-Ning | ▶ Salomon |
| ▶ Bauer Hockey | ▶ Look | ▶ Sherwood Hockey |
| ▶ Blizzard | ▶ Nike | ▶ SHRED. |
| ▶ Decathlon | ▶ Nordica | ▶ Tecnica |
| ▶ Descente | ▶ Oakley | ▶ Under Armour |
| ▶ Dynastar | ▶ Odlo | ▶ Uniqlo |
| ▶ The Faction Collective | ▶ phaenom Footwear | ▶ Yonex |
| ▶ Giro | ▶ Risport | |

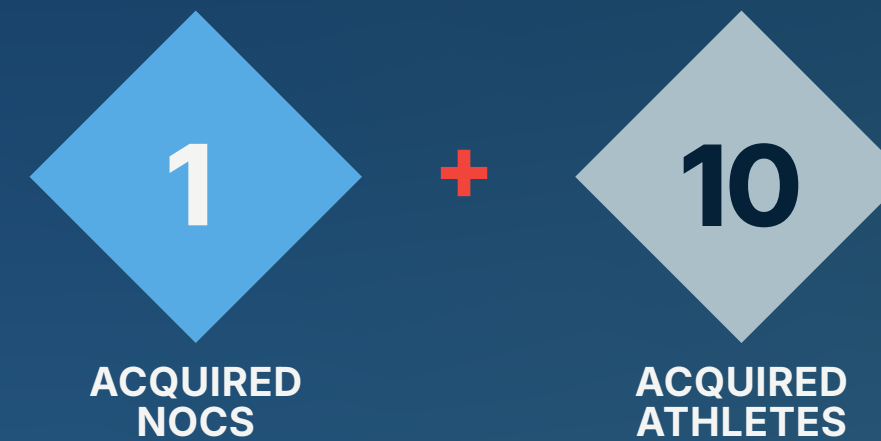


Paralympic Movement

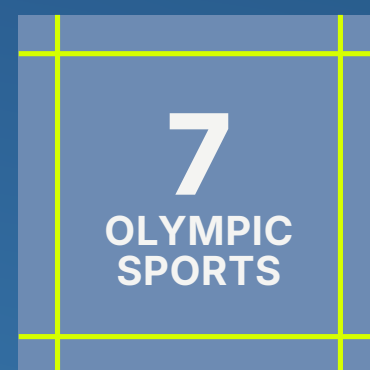
While this report is primarily focused on Olympic stakeholders, the project also extended to the Paralympic Winter Games Milano Cortina 2026. Since not all brands were eligible, a separate document has been prepared covering off the Paralympic brand campaign performances.

What was achieved?

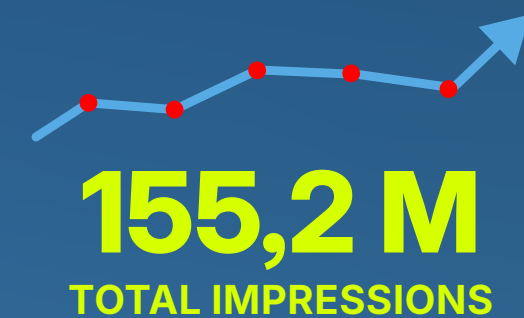
The Road to Milano Cortina 2026 Athlete Storytelling project social media and website results.



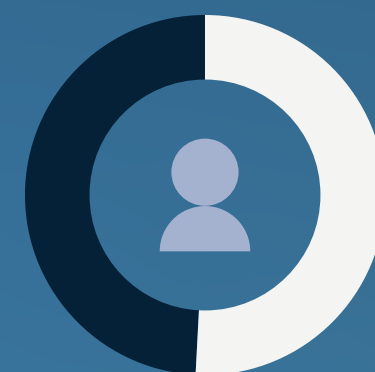
(OUT OF 74 – 62%)



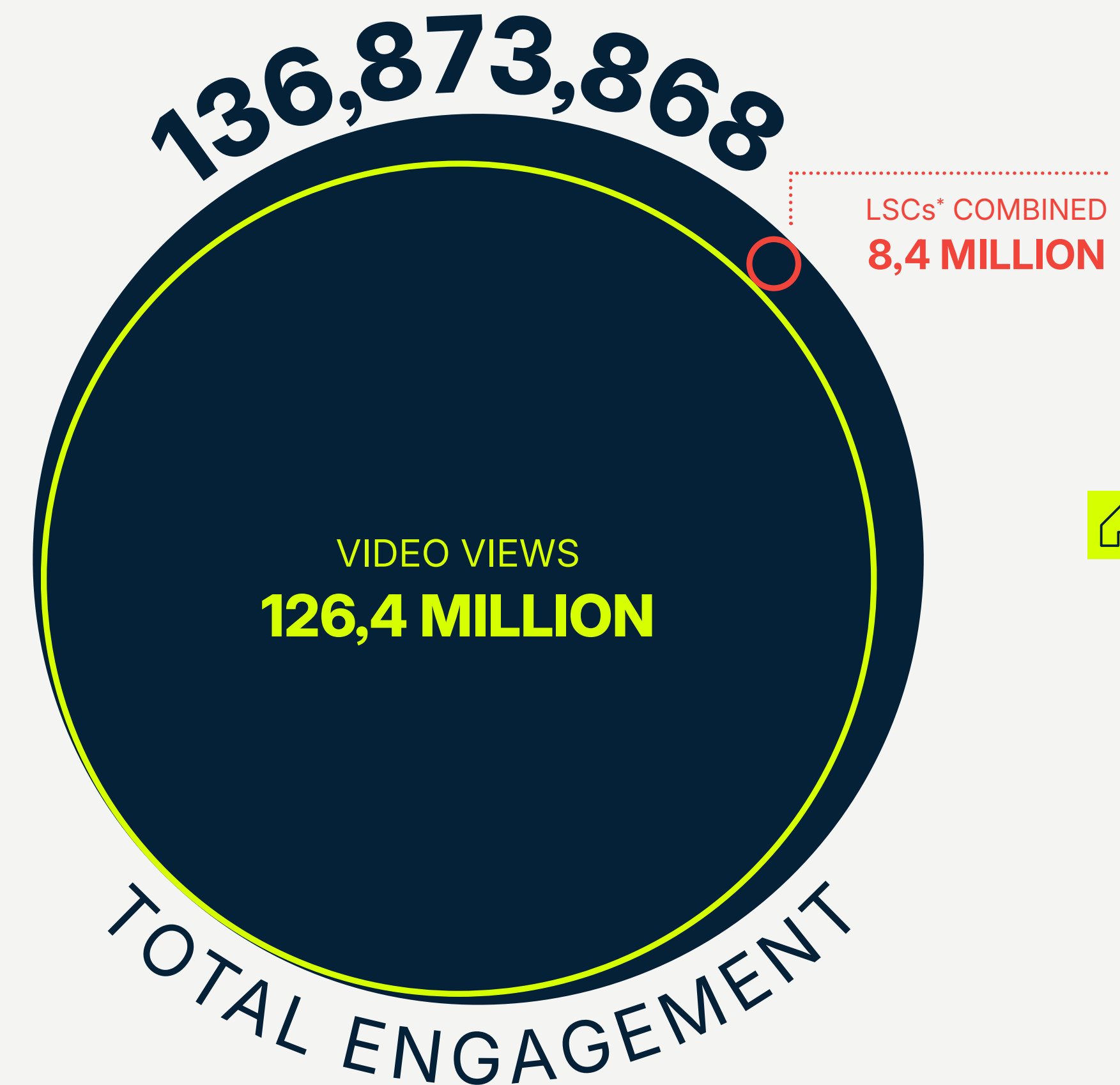
(OUT OF 8 – 88%)



(OUT OF 740 – 58%)



DEMOGRAPHIC
(12 of 18 WFSGI members reporting)



*Likes, Shares and Comments

These results represented the following:



62%

of Winter Olympic athlete nationalities
(46 of 74 represented)

73%
Olympic
Athletes

88%
Olympic
Sports

58%
Olympic
Medals



STATISTICS
STATISTICS

BRAND HOUSES BRAND HOUSES BRAND HOUSES



16

For Milano Cortina most brands chose not to create standalone brand houses. Out of all brands which created bespoke experiences during the Games, only three brands decided to create brand owned locations for activation: adidas (Cortina and Milano), DESCENTE, and Oakley.

The rest of the brands that decided to activate created dedicated spaces inside the NOC Houses of their NOC partners, allowing for synergies to be shared between the brand and NOC partner teams.

Owing to the largely spread-out venue plan it was difficult for many brands to concentrate resources, so brands instead had to opt for optimising personnel to service athletes on the ground, versus providing typical relaxation spaces often seen at other Games.

Brands still invested in these spaces and hired additional personnel to ensure that their contractual athletes have everything they need to perform their best and are celebrated for their efforts.



Brand Houses

4

NOC Houses
(Brands represented)

7

Retail Locations

2,352

Brand House Visitors

5,802

Media Visitors

1,332

Articles

3,315

Press Releases & Stories

290

ACTIVATION CHANNELS
ACTIVATION CHANNELS



BRAND CAMPAIGNS BRAND CAMPAIGNS BRAND CAMPAIGNS

Between the 26 brands in the project, some brands chose to use existing campaigns, while others leveraged the Games to introduce new campaigns.

Within the framework provided, brands identified new opportunities to source content and tell stories that increased athlete visibility and broadened audience engagement through storytelling.

Evolving market positioning through the Olympic moment

Several campaign owners used the Olympic period to signal a strategic shift in brand positioning. Moving away from legacy marketing approaches toward fresher, more culturally attuned messaging – demonstrating how the framework enabled activation around brand evolution, rather than solely performance or product focus.

Adapting existing creative campaigns into compliant Olympic storytelling

Some organisations successfully translated pre-existing creative concepts to align with the Olympic storytelling guidelines, resulting in social media content that achieved wide organic reach. These examples highlight how maintaining core creative assets, while adapting them to compliant narratives, can amplify visibility during the project period.

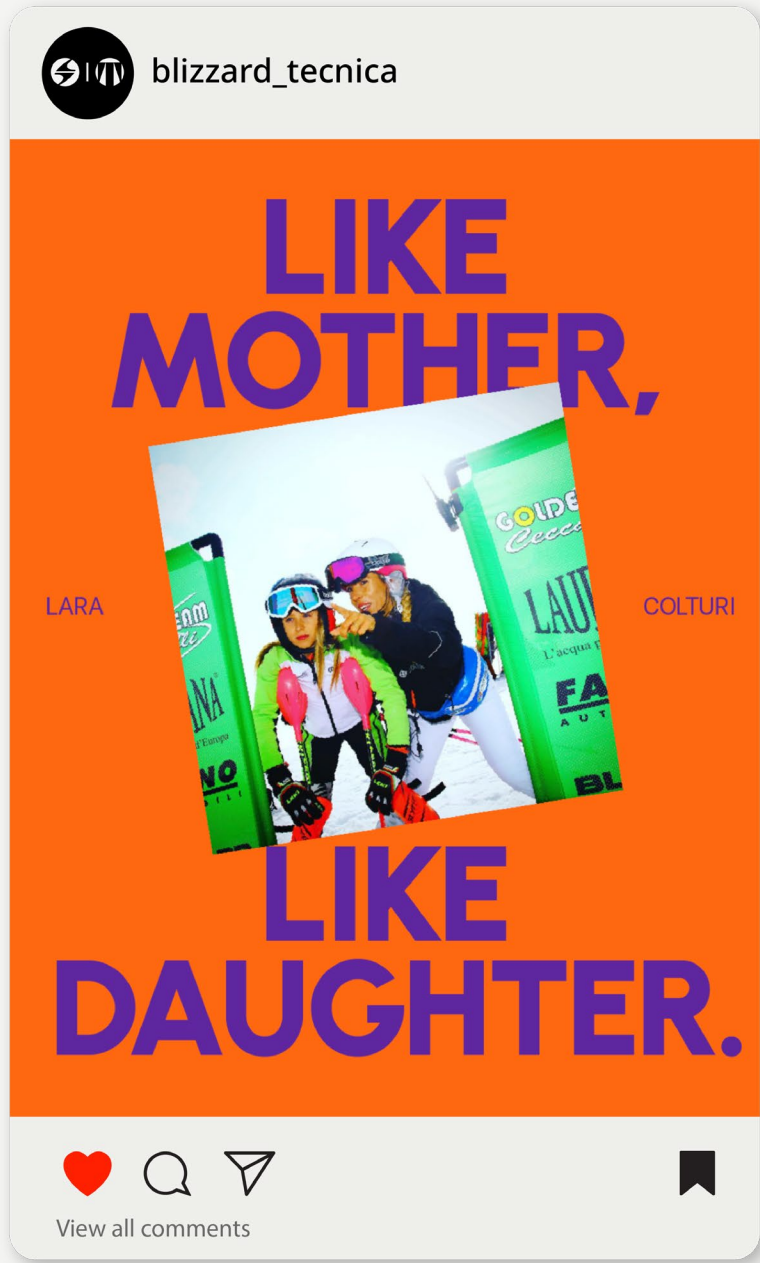
Using reflective personal narratives to engage audiences

Other campaigns invited athletes to participate in introspective storytelling – for example by inviting them to share messages to their future selves. This approach shows how the guidelines facilitated authentic, aspirational athlete engagement without relying on competitive results.

Amplifying distinctive athlete narratives

Some campaigns centred on a small number of athletes with particularly distinctive personal journeys, using storytelling that extended beyond competitive results. This included narratives rooted in family sporting heritage and intergenerational Olympic experience, demonstrating how the framework supported more nuanced, human-led storytelling, while remaining aligned with the project’s guidelines.

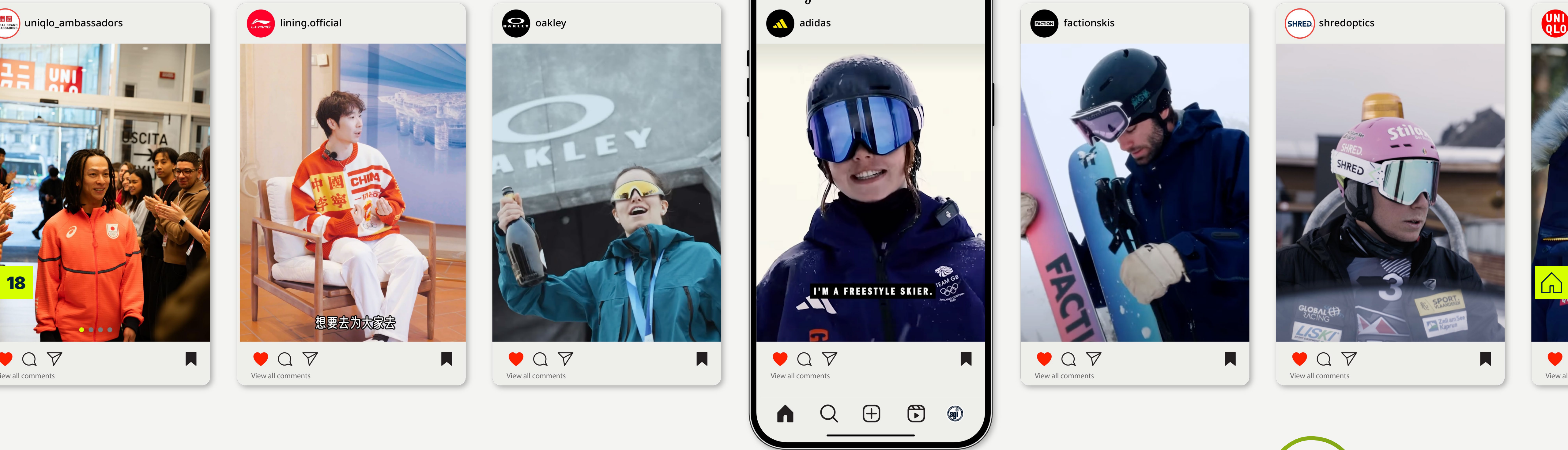
BRAND ACTIVATION BRAND ACTIVATION



BRAND CAMPAIGNS

BRAND CAMPAIGNS

BRAND CAMPAIGNS



Long-form storytelling

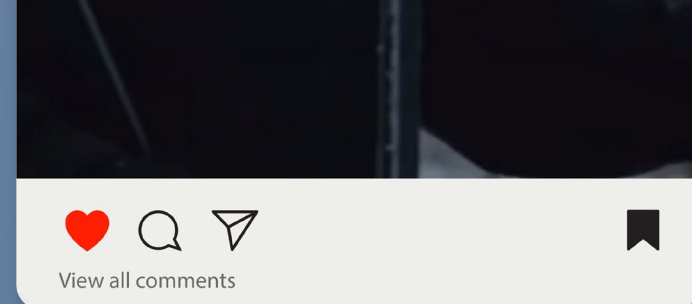
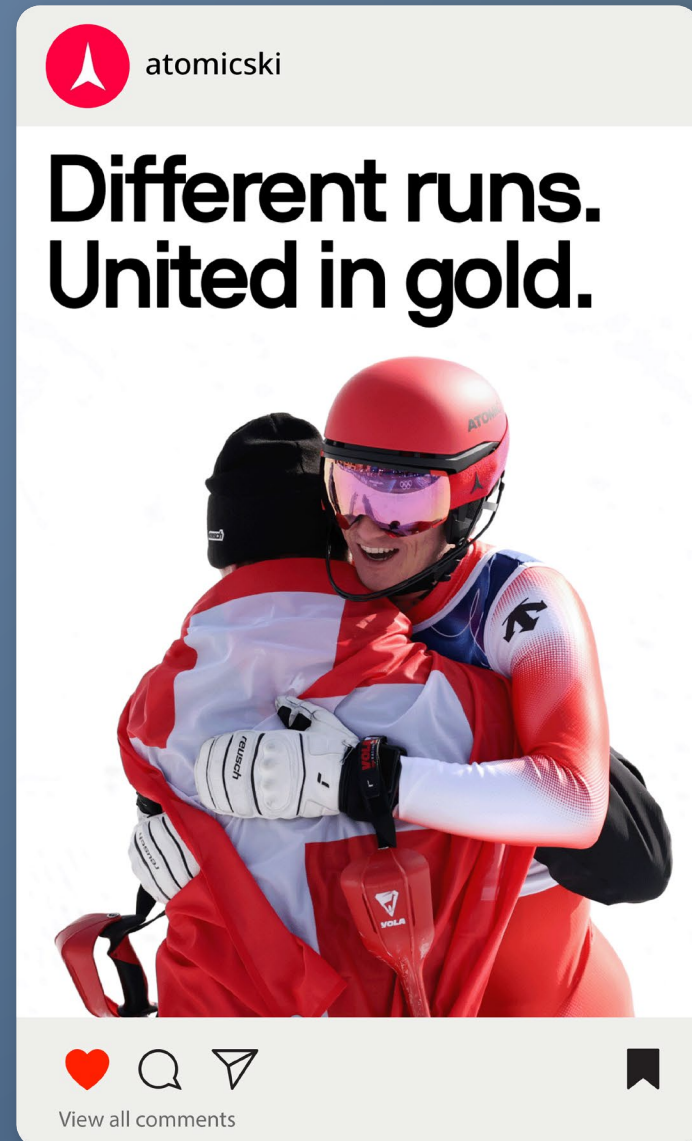
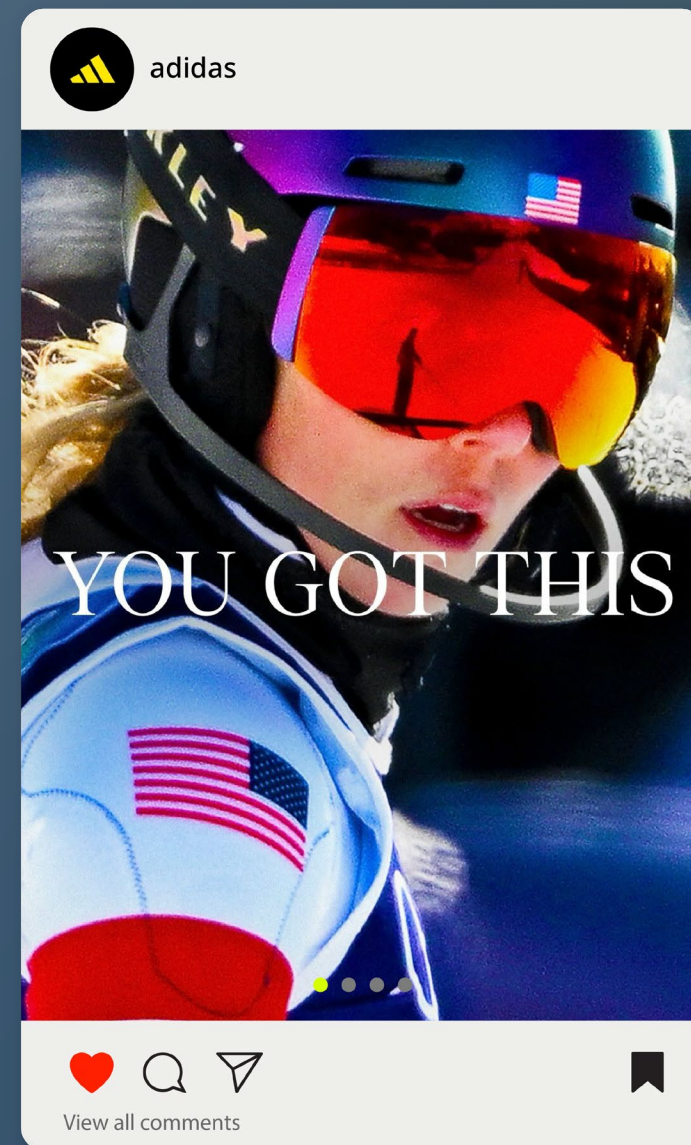
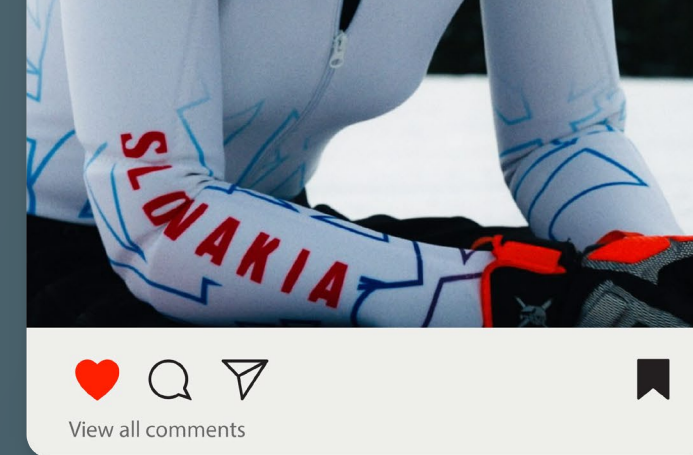
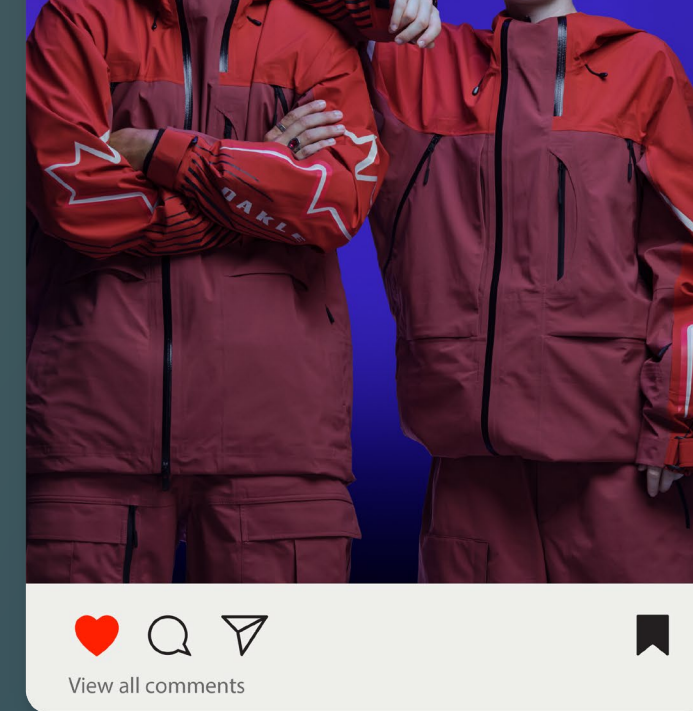
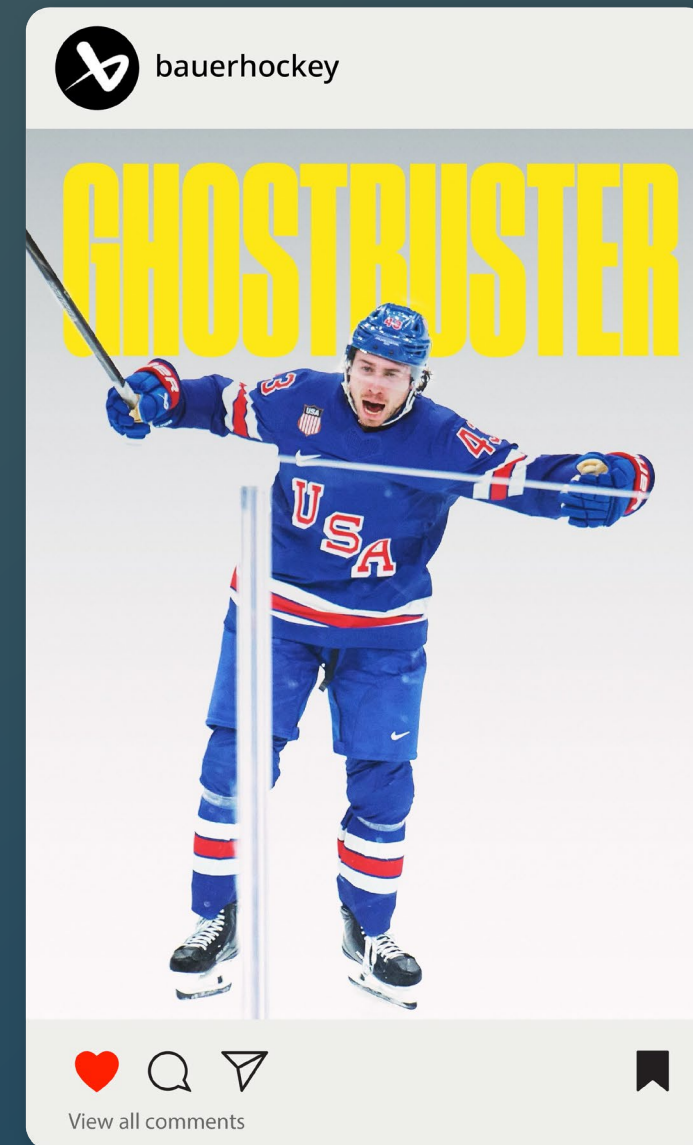
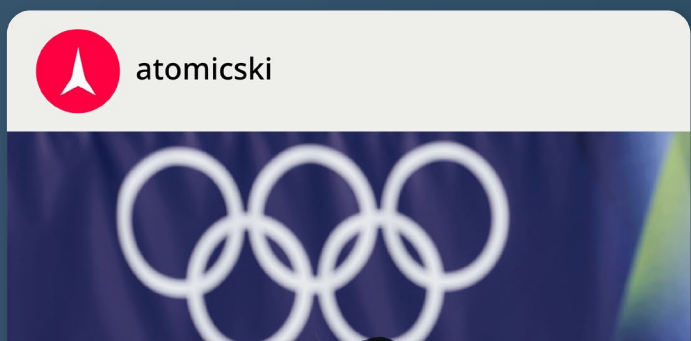
Many brands opted to create longer content in the form of videos or documentary-style interviews for their athletes. This type of engagement connected with a different consumer who might have wanted a deeper dive with their favourite athlete to better understand their background, their personality and mentality, and their support system.

Brands which invested in these types of videos often cut them in different ways, allowing for greater touchpoints with the average consumer and more brand assets that could be activated at unique moments. They also tended to see higher engagement on digital platforms than by using only photography.

BRAND ACTIVATION

BRAND ACTIVATION

BRAND CAMPAIGNS



Power in representation

The power of the Road to Milano Cortina 2026 project lay in the diversity of athletes, sports and campaigns which were represented in the project. With the inclusion of sport-specific and equipment brands in the project for the first time, means that engagement with fan communities could be tailored and personalised like never before, allowing storytelling to reflect the unique culture of each sport and athlete. Having the full breadth of industry brands and athletes represented yielded a greater variety of campaigns available to the average consumer.

FRIDA
KARLSSON



JIN
BOYANG



MATHILDE
GREMAUD



66

I really appreciated the chance to tell my story with adidas in the leadup to the Games. Sharing the film project we had worked on for months on such a big stage was something special. Around the Olympics, attention for our sport is at its peak, so having partners who help elevate what we do makes a real difference.

Frida Karlsson, Sweden, Cross-Country Skiing

66

Every time I come to the Olympic Games, my mindset is different. This Milano Cortina Winter Olympics, for me, is about enjoying every single second. I believe in myself – anything is possible. With the support of the Li-Ning brand, I will strive to bring glory to my country.

Jin Boyang, China, Figure Skating

66

Working with Oakley was a fantastic experience from start to finish. Beyond creating an exciting campaign with an amazing group of athletes, they genuinely took the time to tell our stories and celebrate our achievements together.

Mathilde Gremaud, Switzerland, Freestyle Skiing

MEGAN
OLDHAM



66

It was awesome to have some promotion through Atomic during the Games. There are so many rules during that period, so it's nice to still be able to communicate and promote the brands that have done so much to get me to that point.

Megan Oldham, Canada, Freestyle Skiing

ANNA
KJELLBIN



66

I felt incredibly proud to be one of the athletes selected to be part of Team UNIQLO. Being part of the journey with UNIQLO leading up to the Olympics, and being included in the full campaign launch, definitely made me feel even more excited and proud. It's an experience I will carry with me for the rest of my life and throughout my continued career.

Anna Kjellbin, Sweden, Ice Hockey

SAM
MAES



66

Having SHRED. as a storytelling partner was an amazing opportunity for me to tell the people out there what it means to head to the Olympics as an independent athlete. There is a lot more than just skiing and what it takes to compete against big nations dominating the sport. Showcasing my personal story hopefully motivates other people to chase their own dreams, even if the odds are stacked against you.

Sam Maes, Belgium, Alpine Skiing

OSKAR
ERIKSSON



LISA
VITTOZZI



KIRA
KIMURA



66

It felt amazing being featured as part of UNIQLO Team Sweden, Road to Milano Cortina. To showcase curling and UNIQLO's great work with the Olympic collection for the whole world was a true honor.

The promotion made me more motivated to compete at the Games. Knowing that I was in the UNIQLO Team Sweden made the Olympic Games a cooler experience.

Oskar Eriksson, Sweden, Curling

66

I want to say a special thank you for the incredible campaign Salomon put together. Seeing me everywhere, from social media to billboards around the city and in stores, has truly filled me with pride.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for all the support, not only technical but also human, you've given me over the past few seasons. Reaching the success of Milano Cortina together has been a wonderful journey.

Lisa Vittozzi, Italy, Biathlon

66

I was really happy to see my story being shared and spread around the world through the brand's network, and getting such a strong response.

Having a global platform that can reach places my personal account can't let me stay focused on competing, which is a big advantage as an athlete. It's something I feel is essential for reaching the next level, and it gives me a lot of confidence.

Kira Kimura, Japan, Snowboarding



Contact Ansley O'Neal, WFSGI Head of Athlete Storytelling
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