

CLINTON URGES AD INDUSTRY TO USE REACH TO INFLUENCE WORLD ISSUES



Former President Bill Clinton's charismatic appearance on the stage, added further color and worth to the Cannes ad festival. In a thoughtful and well received speech, he admonished the ad community to use their powers of communication and persuasion to spread information that could help resolve some of the world's major problems. Speaking to a packed house in the Palais des Festivals, Clinton said that the ad agencies must use their acumen, resources and creativity to bend the world in a constructive and optimistic direction. He said, "A lot of the facts that will form the trend lines of the future are not apparent to people. ... The communicators will have a profound influence on how the next 20-30 years will turn out. What people need is honest, synthesized communication. You can do that." The talk was sponsored by Brazilian marketing-services company Grupo ABC, which is also involved in Clinton's Global Initiative in Brazil. Clinton talked about the objectives of his initiative and spoke on length about the climate change and the "enormous disinformation" that surrounded every aspect of it. He also talked about the European Debt Crisis and urged the people to reflect on Greece's drooping status. "The world, as we know, has a lot of problems. But we're fortunate to be alive at this time," he said. He told the youthful crowd that he would gladly trade places with them. "I wish I could be 20 again," he said. "I would take my chances on not being president just to see what happens." He added: "I urge you to think about how you can both do well and do good. And I urge you to think about how we can build a world of shared prosperity and shared responsibilities, not constant conflict and winner take all." On a lighter note, much to the delight of the crowd, he spoke of his favorite ads. "My favorite ads in the United States are those ads encouraging people to switch from cable to DirecTV," he said. "You have a problem. Something disastrous happens. You don't get along with your daughter. She winds up having an alternative lifestyle, marries a guy with too many tattoos. She ends up having a child who wears a dog collar. Now, you have a granddaughter with a dog collar. Switch to DirecTV. ... They're the most hilarious ads I've ever seen." Grey spokesman Owen Dougherty said that Clinton's endorsement of their ads was hugely satisfying and flattering. He said, "Probably no world leader other than Churchill has seen more ups and downs in life, and he has always triumphed with grace and humor. His kind words about our DirecTV ads are icing on the cake of our Cannes wins." Clinton's concluding message was an admonition for the advertisement world as he told that they should go beyond their duties of projecting products and goods and help address world problems. "Since it will increasingly be a world of consent, as all the upheaval in the Middle East and North Africa has shown, the communicators will have a profound influence on how the next 20 or 30 years turns out," he said. "I want to leave this earth knowing that my daughter and the grandchildren I hope to have will live in a world where our common humanity matters more than our interesting differences. ... And I can't think of any other group of people more likely to make it happen than you."