

# Elevating Brands In Culture

An Interview with Ed Horne, President, 160over90

**EDITORS' NOTE** Ed Horne became President of 160over90 in July 2013. Prior to this, he served as Chief Operating Officer of Madison Avenue Sports and Entertainment, a global firm focused on talent representation, marketing, and media after having served in a number of positions at the National Hockey League, ultimately as Senior Executive Vice President. He has also served as Marketing Manager/Director for the National Football League. Horne earned a BA degree in English language and literature/letters from Fairfield University.



Ed Horne

**AGENCY BRIEF** 160over90 (160over90.com), part of the Endeavor network, is a full-service cultural marketing agency that elevates brands by connecting consumers to culture and their passions. With nearly 20 offices globally, 160over90's capabilities span content and video production, cultural strategy, creative development, creator marketing, digital services, entertainment marketing, experiential, media planning, partnerships, public relations, and social media. 160over90 works with leading brands including AB InBev, Audi, DP World, Marriott International, USAA, and Visa.

**You have held leadership roles at the NFL and the NHL. What interested you in the opportunity to lead 160over90 and made you feel it was the right fit?**

I started my career on the agency side so the opportunity to come back to it in a leadership role was appealing. I was connected to a number of people at IMG through my network and career

within the world of sports marketing and in 2013, I joined the organization to lead its global marketing business. Shortly thereafter, IMG was acquired by WME. It was an incredibly exciting time to be part of the merger between these two leaders in entertainment and sport, which to me signaled incredible opportunity for brands. I felt confident that my past roles at the NFL and NHL would set me up for success and provide value to the larger Endeavor organization. Our group later became known as Endeavor Global Marketing

and following an aggregation of acquisitions, we created one unifying brand that is now 160over90.

**Will you provide an overview of 160over90 and how you define its mission?**

160over90 is the award-winning cultural marketing agency owned by Endeavor, the global sports and entertainment company. We work with some of the world's biggest brands, including Anheuser-Busch and Marriott International, to create shared moments and experiences that invite their audiences to feel something real. The name "160over90" references an elevated blood pressure and the innate, thrilling human reaction to something that is completely unexpected. This reaction is what we aim to instill among consumers through our work elevating brands in culture.

**What have been the keys to 160over90's industry leadership and how do you describe the 160over90 difference?**

In a crowded marketplace, our work speaks for itself. We are consistently named to top agency lists, while our work and the leaders behind it are honored through leading industry awards.

What makes 160over90 stand out is our ability to say we are a true cultural marketing agency. As part of Endeavor, we are deeply connected to the people, places, and properties that are trending today and beyond. This intel combined with the agency's expertise help bring the brands we work with directly into culture. Our work with longtime client Anheuser-Busch demonstrates how we think about culture, uncovering opportunities to connect their brands across sports, music, fashion, food, and art. One way we've done this was during the pandemic with Michelob ULTRA, when we had to shift the creative fan experience to be one that could be enjoyed from home. We helped bring to life the Michelob ULTRA Courtside video wall, an immersive experience that brought a virtual crowd to the NBA "bubble." Through screens built inside the arena, we were able to bring fans together to share in the excitement of the game in an entirely new way. While it's great to see the return of live, in-person events, the brand is remembered for how it found a way to keep fans connected to culture.

**Will you highlight 160over90's services and capabilities?**

We are a full-service global agency. With more than 800 employees operating out of nearly 20 offices across the world, we service brands through individual and integrated marketing functions. Our work with USAA is a great example of how the agency is uniquely positioned to activate across capabilities. We support the leading insurance provider across sponsorships and partnerships, PR, creator marketing, and experiential to create 360-degree programming that drives meaningful, measurable business results. Our integrated capabilities additionally support clients with global objectives like Visa and logistics company DP World.

**“The name ‘160over90’ references an elevated blood pressure and the innate, thrilling human reaction to something that is completely unexpected. This reaction is what we aim to instill among consumers through our work elevating brands in culture.”**

**“What makes 160over90 stand out is our ability to say we are a true cultural marketing agency. As part of Endeavor, we are deeply connected to the people, places, and properties that are trending today and beyond.”**

**How important is cultural relevance in the ability for a brand to thrive?**

Cultural relevance is the ultimate currency for brands to win over the hearts and minds of today’s consumers. At 160over90, we say we’re obsessed with culture and it’s this obsession that propels us to deliver work on behalf of our brand partners that speaks to consumers where they already are and through what they are passionate about.

As an example, we paired 160over90 client Marriott Bonvoy with La Mar Taylor, an artist and creative director for The Weeknd represented by WME, to produce the brand’s “A Legendary Affair” event for the Mercedes-AMG Petronas F1 team at the Ritz-Carlton during last spring’s Miami Grand Prix. La Mar Taylor curated the look and feel of the event to speak directly to the market’s F1 fandom and the consumer’s desire for premium, immersive experiences. This partnership placed Marriott and the Ritz-Carlton at the center of cultural conversation, with resulting press and social buzz creating demand for the property.

**How valuable is it for 160over90 to be a part of Endeavor and will you discuss this relationship?**

Endeavor is the ultimate cultural powerhouse. As part of its network, 160over90 is uniquely positioned to offer brands unparalleled access to culture and the trends that will shape the future. Our clients benefit from leveraging the strategic, creative and activation resources through 160over90 as well as the cultural insights, access, and relationships through our network.

One way this comes to life is through our work with McDonald’s. A team comprised

of colleagues from 160over90 and across Endeavor helped secure IP and talent rights for the recent As Featured In campaign that celebrated the brand’s iconic cultural resonance across film and television. Securing the rights for over 20 different talent was no easy feat, and the effort underscores how it was only truly possible given our relationships and access through WME.

**How important is it for 160over90 to build a diverse and inclusive workforce to mirror the diversity of its clients and the community it serves?**

Diversity, equity, and inclusion is of utmost importance to us. Just as our work reaches diverse communities across the world, we believe it is critical that our team reflects the full spectrum of voices, values, and perspectives of the audiences we’re looking to reach through our work.

160over90 also made a strategic investment in Obsidianworks, a culture-powered media and marketing agency co-founded by Michael B. Jordan (who is represented by WME) that speaks to diverse demographics and communities. We’re proud to help Obsidianworks grow and deliver culturally relevant work that not only captivates consumers but inspires them, too.

**Will you discuss 160over90’s focus on corporate responsibility and being a force for good in society?**

We know that consumers put their support and wallets behind brands that take a stand, and they are just as quick to cancel those that don’t. As an agency, we don’t just see corporate responsibility as a standalone element within the marketing mix. We work with our clients to effectively, authentically communicate how

they are living and growing their purpose to spark positive change.

Working with Obsidianworks and WME Sports, we established with 160over90 client Invesco the Invesco QQQ Legacy Classic in 2021, a one-day doubleheader college basketball showcase featuring Historic Black Colleges and Universities. Now entering its third year, Legacy Classic continues to grow as a purpose-driven brand that is uniquely situated at the intersection of sports, advocacy, and culture.

Beyond the tournament itself, the program includes a startup pitch competition, career fairs, and musical performances.

**How do you define the keys to effective leadership and how do you describe your leadership style?**

I’ve learned that to be an effective leader, you need to be strategic in your decision-making and root it in both knowledge and instincts. At the same time, I think it’s important to recognize that being an effective leader doesn’t mean you can’t bring some humanity, empathy, and humility to the job.

I believe I’ve gotten to where I am today by being serially curious about the world around me, thinking differently, and proving the value of good marketing. As a leader, I try and instill these character traits among my teams to drive them to produce their best work.

**What advice do you offer to young people beginning their careers?**

Build relationships, stay curious to avoid becoming complacent, and seek out the opportunities that allow you to express your individuality and strengths. Where you are lacking in skill or experience, work hard to overcome it. ●

**“Cultural relevance is the ultimate currency for brands to win over the hearts and minds of today’s consumers. At 160over90, we say we’re obsessed with culture and it’s this obsession that propels us to deliver work on behalf of our brand partners that speaks to consumers where they already are and through what they are passionate about.”**