

Kiwi Ingenuity

What comes to mind when you hear Kiwi ingenuity? Is it an image of a Kiwi person using normal household items to fix or make something useful? Is that the same way the media displays it?

New Zealand media displays Kiwi ingenuity as a positive form of Identity for New Zealanders.

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The idea of kiwi ingenuity is the idea that New Zealanders are good at coming up with solutions to any problem and that sometimes this can be unconventional, unusual or something that uses whatever is around. The first media representation I researched was the “*Lake Dave ad.*” This ad creates a representation of Kiwi ingenuity which is displayed a character finds a lake that is un-named and decides to name it after himself. He has all the information and equipment he will need to do this, and we see him working to get it done. What Dave does is something only a man with character and humour would do. It represents not only Kiwi ingenuity but also Kiwis and how we think. Naming a lake after yourself, some would think is a big job and would take lots of money and power to do, but kiwi ingenuity is displayed in this ad because of how Dave can do this with only camping equipment and some ingenuity. The makers of this ad created a representation of kiwi ingenuity because the criteria for an ad competition was to display new Zealand, New Zealanders and Dave is the perfect example of a new Zealander and his ingenuity.

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This still [not shown] shows viewers the small amount of equipment Dave required to accomplish his goal. He used Kiwi ingenuity to make/do a lot out of a little and only chose to take equipment that would satisfy his needs and not slow him down or make achieving his goal a complicated task. This still shows us how Dave went about naming a lake after him. He is stapling big cut out letters to a black piece of fabric in order to make a banner big enough to be seen from Space satellites. This is a humorous aspect to the ad and is a very clever display of Kiwi ingenuity. The last still from this ad shows Dave rowing out to the middle of the lake with the banner connected to his row boat.

The second media text which shows kiwi ingenuity was a Close Up clip about the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. The clip sums up the fact that all efforts to stop the spill a few weeks after it happened had failed and they were searching for new ideas that could work. Two Kiwi men come up with an idea and submit it to the people in charge of the spill in the hopes that they will consider using it. Kiwi ingenuity is clearly represented in this clip. Not only does the reporter mention the idea as “a bit of Kiwi ingenuity” but we can see that the men’s solution to this massive problem is not normal. Watchers from other countries, had they heard of it before, would immediately think of this solution as kiwi ingenuity, New Zealanders would think it normal for two common men to step forward with a bizarre idea of how to stop a global pollution problem, and with something as common as a house hold item. This image is created through the use of the camera shots used to show audience members what the men plan to do to fix this oil spill, and the comments made about a slinky (a kids toy) being used to fix a mega problem. It portrays kiwis as thinkers, showing viewers that we can think outside the box to solve a problem and use something we already have to do so. They created this image to give New Zealand a good image. Ideas were flooding in about ways to fix the spill and this kiwi idea stood out because it was created with a cheap object that anyone can buy easily, it did not require millions to create or buy. This makes kiwis look different and individual because of our ability to fix problems or improve things with objects we already possess. Some examples of kiwi ingenuity are used only in New Zealand as they are the solution to New Zealanders small problems, however this example of ingenuity is displayed on a much larger scale. This clip targets news watchers and those who were interested in the oil spill and how it would be stopped. Viewers were very

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interested in this method and were curious to see if it would work so comments were sent in to the managers of BP asking if it could be carried out.

The third media representation I researched was the Mitre 10 sandpit ad. The ad is about two young children in a sandpit who are discussing building a retaining wall. They are representing your average Kiwi bloke when they talk about getting a few mates around to help build the wall, instead of hiring professionals. The representation of Kiwi ingenuity is created and portrayed by the kids in this ad. The quote "DIY, its in our DNA" is also communicating the message that kiwi ingenuity is in every kiwi. The kids are trying to find a way to improve things and to do it without making a big fuss. When the little boy says that he is going to call in a group of guys to put up the retaining wall the other kid says that they can do it themselves, they could call in a few friends.

This is something kiwis would do to get a job done and not have to pay for a company to do it. Some may think it is a cheap way to do things but we find it perfectly acceptable to do it our way, and by far cheaper. This representation is created mainly to sell a company to viewers but also to show that New Zealanders are raised and taught to do things ourselves and find a way to fix things with objects we already have. This ad had a huge impact on New Zealanders, they loved it, and it shaped our identity in a good way. Other cultures or people can see that we are logical, creative people and we are raised in a way that reflects what our parents and ancestors were taught. It shows that we are taught from a young age to think about how we can do stuff without needing others to. We are taught to think outside the box and think for ourselves, not rely on others. This ad targets TV audiences and Mitre 10 buyers. Audiences loved this ad and requested that it be aired more frequently. Comments from all around the country showed how much New Zealanders enjoyed it. Although it did open a can of worms between some Aussies and Kiwis.

The last media representation I researched was another Close Up clip about the worlds longest waterslide, which is located on a farm in New Zealand... [section removed]

The four media representations I have studied all represent Kiwi ingenuity as a creative, smart method to many common or uncommon situations that arise. They show viewers that Kiwi's can accomplish any task they set their minds to, and with lower costs and less equipment than other people may use when trying to accomplish the task. The media platforms- advertisements, and news clips- are good platforms for displaying what the media believes are real examples of kiwi ingenuity. Both of the close up clips are great solutions to problems, and they both offer fun or amusements to viewers (or in the waterslides case, thrill seekers). They allow audiences to get a thorough idea of what the people are using Kiwi ingenuity for, and it is shown as a positive aspect of being a New Zealander, and a great quality to possess. We are proud of our history of being inventors and problem solvers and these clips show that. They give a message that Kiwis will use their good qualities for the benefit of others, and the fact that these clips were broadcasted on the news, means they are highly important. Whereas the close up articles show kiwi ingenuity for real, the advertisements for Lake Dave and Mitre Ten instead use the fact that this representation is recognised to help sell or promote a product.