

TiNY shoots 9 ads in one day for Avantis Investors

The humorous spots will debut during the American Century Championship golf tourney.

by Kyle O'Brien July 11 2025



(Photo credit: American Century Investments / YouTube)

Creative agency TiNY was assigned a unique challenge by its client American Century Investments: Make ads explaining the importance of exchange-traded funds (ETFs) managed by Avantis Investors, a \$71 billion investment capability from American Century Investments, that would air only once during a celebrity golf tournament. And make them fun.

The challenge was accepted, expectations were met and then some.

The message needed to state that some index ETFs only rebalance their holdings once a year, while Avantis evaluates investments daily to deliver better

outcomes. An additional barrier: The agency had to produce the spots on a tight timeline and a tight budget.

The campaign debuts this month during the 36th American Century Championship, a celebrity golf tournament in Lake Tahoe that has raised more than \$8 million for dozens of worthy causes and nonprofits.

TiNY took the opportunity of having a trusting client with bold ambitions to turn the broadcast into a unique advertising event with nine connected commercials, each airing only once. While all spots begin the same way, each ad ends with a unique comedic twist.

The three American Century Investments spots the agency and client worked on together last year will run again, but this year the company features its Avantis brand for the first time. As the title sponsor of the tournament, American Century gets a large share of televised ad spots and it wanted to have fun with them.

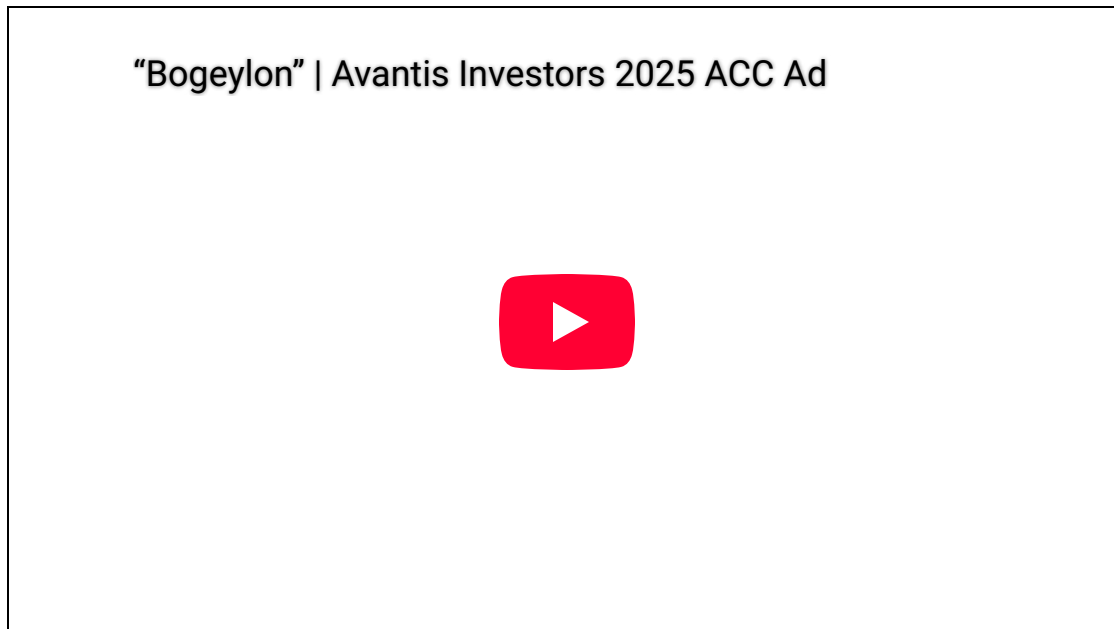
“We have been the title sponsor of the American Century Championship now for 27 years, historically focusing entirely on the American Century master brand. But with the growth of our Avantis brand and its capabilities, we thought it was the right time to bring this to market on this major stage,” said American Century Investments CMO Erik Schneberger.

The creative strategy and execution

TiNY worked with the same director, Evan Silver, and production company, Reform School, as the previous year. With the same budget and crew, working in Atlanta, TiNY set out to do some creative math to make the one day of

production work. With the goal of creating nine or 10 spots out of the allotted time, they came up with a concept that would allow the same opening setup — a guy on an overgrown golf course, which acts as a metaphor for having to wait a year to have your ETF attended to. When the golfer points out to his partner that he’s in an overgrown fairway, then points to the actual rough, is when things get fun.

The scenes in the second half of the spots occur in a dark, wooded forest featuring a variety of characters — intrepid explorers-turned-escaped criminals, a lost pizza delivery guy, Hansel and Gretel and even Bigfoot — to show how lost an investor can get when they’re left in the dark. It gets comically meta when a sheriff at the end cites the players for beating the joke to death.



The creative strategy underscores Avantis’ core message: Paying attention matters, especially when it comes to managing ETFs.

“In terms of going with making nine spots all different, but starting the same, that really was a matter of building up trust over a long relationship,” said Michael Stoopack, partner and president at TiNY. He added that most clients wouldn’t agree to something that far out, but was appreciated by American Century.

During a three-day broadcast window, starting Friday, July 11, Avantis will avoid repeating a single ad and possibly annoying the audience, with the payoff going to those who get to see each spot.

“We challenged ourselves to make the same, hard-hitting product message feel fresh nine different ways,” said Tom Christmann, partner and co-chief creative officer. “Each spot rewards viewers who stick with it. Just like Avantis, we believe paying attention is rewarding.”

Mike Rovner, partner and co-chief creative officer at TiNY, added that every spot is a metaphor for the product, and the campaign is also a metaphor for the product — simply put, paying attention matters.

In addition to the TV spots, TiNY also wrote an email for the company to send out to financial advisers, letting them in on the campaign and getting the financial community involved.

“It's not just a commercial that you happen to see — it's an event put on for our audience,” said Christmann.

Rovner said they were able to do nine spots in one day because they were familiar with all parties involved, asked the right questions before they started and didn't promise the client anything they couldn't deliver.

“(TiNY is) great, incredibly creative, very thoughtful and collaborative, really staying true to the message, but also really thinking through how we deliver this in a unique, interesting way,” said Schneberger.

RELATED ARTICLES

1-3 of 5



Subway swings into action with Netflix for 'Happy Gilmore 2'



Samsung spotlights Galaxy products, South Korean roots following financial blow