

Overview:

Soles4Souls Canada faced two major challenges during the 2025 holiday season. First, despite strong brand recognition in the U.S., the Canadian chapter continued to face low awareness. Many Canadians were unfamiliar with the organization and, more critically, with the impact of its mission: providing people in need with essential clothing and shoes. Research shows that access to proper footwear influences a person's ability to succeed in school, secure employment, and participate confidently in their community.

Second, Soles4Souls Canada confronted a challenge shared by many not-for-profits during the holidays: breaking through a season dominated by consumerism. With attention fixed on shopping and spending, inspiring Canadians to pause and consider those without basic necessities required a bold, disruptive idea.

The campaign centered on a simple, human truth: everyone deserves proper footwear. We encouraged people to rethink their holiday spending by reminding them that, while they shopped for new clothes and shoes, many in their own community lacked even the essentials. The campaign was anchored in a familiar cultural footwear event: the shoe drop. But instead of launching the latest style or colourway, this drop introduced the “Not-So-New Arrivals,” a display of worn-out shoes reflecting what many people in need rely on every day. By placing these realities beside the familiar shoe drop format, the campaign aimed to spark an emotional reaction and invite viewers to reconsider some of their holiday spending.

The campaign targeted socially conscious Canadians aged 25–45—urban, digitally active individuals motivated by purpose driven brands and looking for meaningful ways to make an impact during the holidays.

Entry Description:

To cut through the holiday noise, Soles4Souls Canada reimaged the traditional retail experience with an unexpected twist. “Not-So-New Arrivals,” a pop-up installation on Toronto's Ossington Avenue, mimicked the look and feel of a premium shoe boutique. Spotlit pedestals displayed what appeared to be exclusive, one-of-a-kind pieces—until viewers looked closer. The shoes weren't new at all; they were worn, torn, and threadbare. Each pair represented the lived experience of someone without access to proper footwear, from school age children to job seekers to people experiencing homelessness. For countless Canadians, footwear looks far closer to what sat in that window than anything found in a holiday sale. To build anticipation, Soles4Souls released teaser videos and

social content positioning the installation as an exclusive, high-end drop until the reveal. Influencers and local media were invited to experience it firsthand and amplify the message. Every touchpoint included a clear call to donate, directing people to contribute shoes or funds online. Building on the momentum, the campaign moved into Toronto's Eaton Centre—North America's busiest shopping hub—through a limited time activation created with HOKA, a Soles4Souls partner. Positioned directly in the flow of holiday shoppers, the display encouraged passersby to pause and reflect on the realities of inadequate footwear.

Impact:

By combining a powerful physical activation with digital storytelling and community engagement, the campaign drove awareness and got the city talking:

- 525M Earned Impressions
- 27K Social Engagements
- 122 Media Stories
- 97% Positive Sentiment
- 20% Lift in Online Conversations vs. Previous Month
- Contributed to 170% Increase in Brand Conversation vs. Previous Year

By transforming a storefront into an invitation for empathy and understanding, “Not-So New Arrivals” didn't just meet its objective—it turned heads, sparked conversation, and redefined the shoe drop.