



The Age of Branded Content

Defining & exploring branded content today

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1. Introduction

2012 was seminal year for branded content. Content pervades every aspect of our lives. It has transformed communication, between us and to us.

The rapid growth of digital technology has allowed us to edit our own content. To choose what we look at and what we share. It has empowered nations, governments and consumers.

Word of mouth has always been important. Digital word of mouth is a new force in communications.

To influence digital word of mouth, we must provide a gift and that gift is content that people will talk about. People don't have time for interruption but everyone will share the stuff they love. This is the essence of new investment and communications strategies.

New, interesting, stimulating formats and content are becoming priceless. Brands pay for it with money, media owners with space, customers with their time.

Great Branded Content is Priceless

Brand's paying to produce content is nothing new. The original Soap Operas broadcast on American radio in the 1950's were funded by soap manufacturers such as, Procter & Gamble, Lever Brothers, Dial Corporation and Colgate-Palmolive.

The massive proliferation of channels, rapid acceleration in new technology and explosion of social media now mean that brands need to devise new strategies to engage with their customers.

The advance of technology has been a 'game changer' for branded content. The rapid growth of tablets and mobile smart phones have meant that content is accessible anytime and anywhere. Add to this the explosion of social media which has meant that content is instantly accessed and shared.

We have seen this manifest itself in the number of major brands adopting a content led strategy.



Branded Content: Market Overview

Advancement of technology and social media

£1BN market

Choose to see and hear

Opt-in culture

Positive attention = creating great desired content

Dramatic increase in the use of branded content

“Content is King[maker]”



2. Branded Content: Definition & Variants

Branded Content is anything a brand does that is not directly about communication.

It is defined as a brand funding content, created to communicate with customers in an entertaining, engaging, relevant way across any chosen media channel, achieving brand marketing objectives.

Or more simply put it is **editorially led marketing**.



Branded entertainment: It is an entertainment-based vehicle that is funded by and complementary to a brand's marketing strategy.

Advertiser funded programming (AFP): Affords brands a deeper relationship with programming via a funding model either in full or in partnership with the media owner.

Short or long form branded vignettes: Short form branded content (less than 5-minutes) compresses engaging material without becoming a formulaic traditional commercial. Long form branded content is often an extension of short form branded content and is typically in excess of 30 minutes in length.

Brand storytelling: Is a way to convey a commercial message using a brand's history and existing assets.

Branded content partnership: Is a joint venture between a brand and a media owner to create original audiovisual programming across any media platform.

Brand integration: Is an evolution of product placement, whereby the brand is more subtly written into the entertainment format, primarily in film and allows further exploitation through unique content creation.

Product placement: The paid for use or mention of a product within a programme/ film.

Virtual product placement: the product is inserted after the programme is complete, often with the placement tailored to the demographic of the viewer.

Branded channel: A broadcast or online framework established to showcase videos that support and build the brand.

Branded eBooks: Is a book-length publication in digital form, consisting of text, images, or both, and produced on, published through, and readable on computers or other electronic devices.

Branded webisodes: Aired online and therefore engineered for the online viewer, resulting in episodes less than 15 minutes in length.

Branded games: Brand can be integrated via product placement, placed prominently or fully integrated within the content of the game.

Branded events: By attending the event, individuals are invited into a world created by the brand however, they may take a passive participatory stance.

3. Leading Brands Adopting Content Strategies

General Electric, the conglomerate, is utilising an increasingly targeted approach to content marketing and "storytelling" as a means of engaging consumers and business clients more effectively.

"We are involved in renewable energy in transportation, healthcare and natural gases. These are inherently interesting. We use storytelling, which is critical, to make sure we bring to life what we do in ways that are inherently interesting." Linda Boff, executive director, global digital marketing for GE said recently.

She added, "Content is important because it helps people relate to what it is we do. We obsess about content. We think of it as a way to tell the great stories of GE. The GE approach to content is: We completely lean into who we are."



GE imagination at work

“All advertisers need a lot more content so that they can keep the engagement with consumers fresh and relevant, because of the 24/7 connectivity. If you’re going to be successful around the world, you have to have fat and fertile ideas at the core.”

Jonathan Mildenhall,
Coca-Cola, VP Global Advertising Strategy and Creative Excellence



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qhtjyysec5A>

CONTENT 2020

HOW THE Coca-Cola COMPANY WILL EVOLVE APPROACH TO THE MARKETPLACE ON ITS BRANDS

"If we disappoint consumers, they'll hunt you down and call you out in a way that they were never able to do before," Marc Pritchard, P&G's global marketing and brand building officer said.

Social listening has become a key way to track positive and negative chatter. Tide, the laundry detergent, is one of a number of P&G brands with a dedicated "Newsdesk" that constantly monitors this activity and enters the conversation when relevant.

"Social media is the world's focus group", Pritchard said.

Platforms like Twitter are an always-on, real-time conversation. We listen more than we talk in social media."



4. Case studies

Heineken “Open Your World”

The campaign

Agency: Wieden+Kennedy (The Netherlands)

- The objective was to bring to life Heineken’s new "Open Your world" strategy, by creating engagement in areas that are at the centre of their core consumers life (Music, Football, Night Life, Social Media), at global level.
- This campaign was first launched on Heineken’s Facebook page to more than 900.000 fans, before being launched on TV and cinema screens around the world. With this campaign, Heineken recognies the legend in all of its drinkers. Men who know their way around and recognise a fine beer when they taste one; In "The Entrance” video, the film’s hero demonstrates his legendary-ness by making the ultimate party entrance.

The results

- 75 markets covered
- 9-hour live show on the Facebook page show, with 25M views
- 6M fans on Facebook in year 1
- A multiple award winning campaign, with Heineken being named as Brand Of The Year at MIPTV 2012



The campaign

Agency: Ogilvy & Mather (France)

- Key objective was to change the perception of Perrier mineral water brand. It was targeted at aspirational 25-40 year olds, who “enjoy socialising and really like to have a good time”.
- Perrier created mini-dramas in ‘Le Club Perrier’ that evolved based on the number of viewers it achieve. The campaign ran on their YouTube channel as a digital extension of a 30” TV campaign. Six versions of the same theme – a girl walks into a nightclub and comes across interesting people and "mini dramas. The scenes get more interesting as video versions are unlocked, more people appear in the club.

The results

- 1st YouTube video to evolve based on the number of viewers
- It achieved 11.5 million views on its dedicated YouTube channel
- Number 1 tweeted about video in France
- 2000 Facebook fans in 2 days



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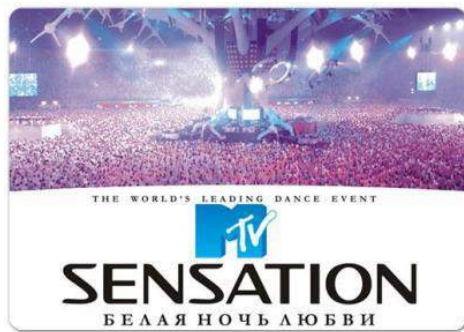
The campaign

Agency: OMD Fuse (Russia)

- Key objective was to put Persil washing powder into the minds of Russia's youth and become the brand they recognise and trust when they are in-store (whereas all communication had been traditionally targeted at housewives).
- To create a new link in young consumers minds, Persil created a dance club event in St Petersburg broadcasted on MTV, where everyone attending had to dress in white. Persil logos were integrated throughout the all-white arena and the "Sensational Whiteness" video being broadcast every 20 minutes. They set up a Deluxe Zone which had lines of white clothing hanging up. At the Sensation Shops, specially designed clothing could be purchased with each person given a Persil sachet.

The results

- 100.000 people interacted with Persil on the "Sensation" forum and recommended the brand to each other
- 25.000 people aged 18 to 35 bought tickets to the event
- 9% brand awareness uplift among target audience and 8% increase in brand usage



Persil

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Chipotle 'Cultivate Campaign'

The campaign

Agency: Creative Artists Agency (USA)

- Key objective was to raise awareness on the fact Chipotle has radically changed fast food: from cooking fresh food daily, to building a supply chain of 7,000+ farmers, to sourcing more local produce and sustainably raised meat than anyone, anywhere.
- Distributed using a digital-first strategy, the film first launched on YouTube with no paid media support. The launch was supported with an earned media plan and the social media assets of Chipotle, Willie Nelson and Coldplay to a collective audience of 21m Facebook fans.
- Next, the campaign added paid digital while shifting to the big screen with Back To The Start spending 8 weeks running on 10,000+ theatrical screens across the nation. Finally, the campaign took Chipotle into TV advertising. Back To The Start ran in its entirety, during the 54th Annual Grammy Awards to an audience of over 40m viewers.

The results

- The first Grand Prix winner of the Branded Content & Entertainment category at Cannes Lions was awarded to Chipotle fast food restaurant.
- 11M impressions via Twitter alone in 9 days
- 7M+ views on YouTube



MINI 'All the wrong places'

The campaign

Agency: BSUR (The Netherlands)

- Key objective was to establish a unique and masculine niche for the MINI Coupé and Roadster within the MINI range, whilst reinvigorating the MINI brand with younger guys (as research showed MINI was losing its iconic edge and its appeal to men).
- ALL THE WRONG PLACES is social media content series where the new MINI, a host and 5 Facebook Co-Pilots take on unwise Missions across the globe. And it was the very first time either brand had put their Facebook fans in front of the camera.
- Tapping in to VICE's extensive network an activation plan was drawn up for driving people to the campaign via monthly online banners on vice.com (US, UK, Italy, Japan and France), posts on VICE's social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, Digg, StumbleUpon, Reddit), 2 bursts of print ads in Vice Magazine, global press releases for launch and for each episode, as well as content distribution to a number of established syndication partners.
- Additionally, MINI FB banners were used for the campaign launch and YouTube True View ads for the first two episode launches. Was also developed a detailed 6 month editorial calendar with a weekly communication strategy to engage the global MINI social media community through Facebook, Twitter and MINISpace.

The results

- Over 3 million video views, and more than 5,833 days of unique MINI Coupé and Roadster content has been consumed.
- 101% increase in the key audience of younger guys aged 25-34.



ALL THE WRONG PLACES

A worm eating, moose hoof tossing, cactus stabbing, tyre blowing, bear gizzard distilled vodka drinking, voodoo dodging MINI adventure web series.

CHALLENGE: Research showed MINI was losing its iconic appeal with younger guys. Our challenge was to use the launch of the MINI Coupé and Roadster to reinvigorate the MINI brand's adventurous spirit amongst this key target market.

IDEA: A media, actor-led branded content campaign. All THE WRONG PLACES series was MINI, a host and 5 Co-Pilots (recruited from MINI Facebook fan base) who were sent to the globe to carry out unwise missions like bear gizzard drinking, cactus stabbing, tyre blowing and more. We used the MINI and 5 Co-Pilots' media fans in front of the camera. We took 100+ photos, videos, songs, vlogs and live Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and more to ALL THE WRONG PLACES.

RESULTS:

- Over 3 million video views and counting
- Over 5,833 days of unwise MINI branded content consumed
- 101% increase in key audience of younger guys, 25-34

SUPPORTING CONTENT PER MISSION

- THE BOSS
- THE BOSS
- QNESS
- MINI product advertisements
- MINI Facebook App launch

MISSION	AUG.	SEPT.	OCT.	NOV.	DEC.	JAN.	FEB.	MAR.
MISSION 1: TRANSFORMER TRUCKS JAPAN								
MISSION 2: TAXI HIT SQUAD SOUTH AFRICA								
MISSION 3: DANCERS WITH SCISSORS PERU								
MISSION 4: MICRONATIONS ROAD TRIP SWEDEN								
MISSION 5: OBEAH MAGIC MAN JAMAICA								

Littlewoods 'Live'

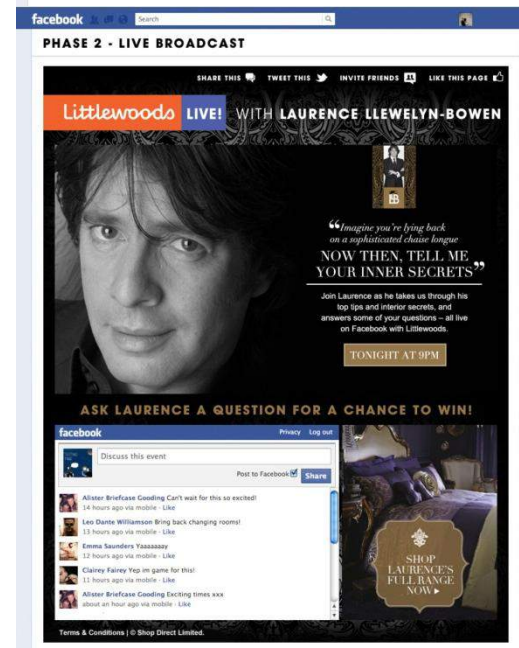
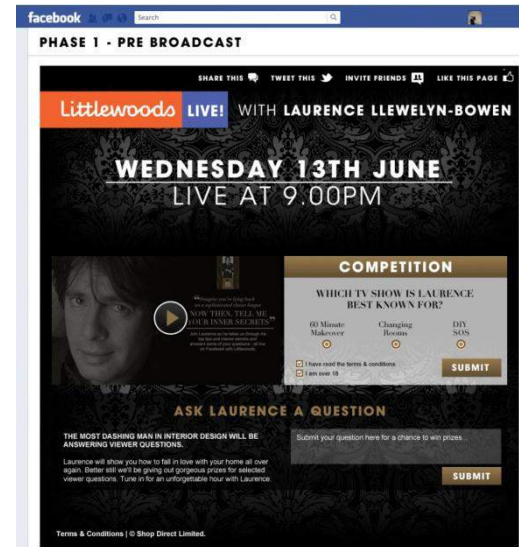
The campaign

Agency: Dot Talent (UK)

- Key objective was for Littlewoods – one of the UK largest online retailers - to look for new ways to engage their consumer base and drive sales.
- The campaign 'Littlewoods Live' was a UK retail and Facebook first. The format is comprised of a series of live one-hour interactive broadcasts hosted on Facebook. The launch show featured a home makeover format with celebrity presenter Laurence Llewelyn-Bowen introducing his new homewares range. The interactive format took real-time questions and comments from viewers via the Facebook application which streamed the show, and by using a live phone-in strand. Live footage was later re-purposed to become shoppable VOD content, housed on the retailer's website, whose aim was to further drive sales.

The results

- The A 24-hour Facebook advertising spend then enabled Littlewoods to increase its reach by 5,700% from 70,000 to 4 million on the day of broadcast!
- The Facebook page increased 10% with 15,000 new likes gained as a result of the broadcast.
- 4,000 people streamed the show in real-time.
- 1,500 comments were posted by viewers during the programme.



Nissan 'Juke Rocks'

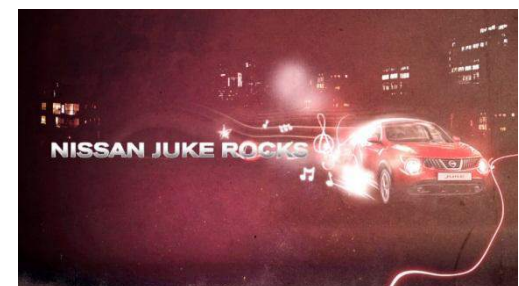
The campaign

Agency: Somethin' Else (UK)

- Key objective was to support the launch of the new Nissan Juke in key European markets (France, Germany, Italy, Spain) with a branded video content campaign.
- The campaign was social-media driven competition between popular up-and-coming local music acts in each of the European markets that was captured in a series of video episodes broadcast across Europe on a Nissan Juke Rocks branded YouTube channel.
- Each act was given a Nissan Juke for one week and asked to complete a series of urban, musical challenges, such as performing at 3 fans' houses within 3 hours, setting up an impromptu flashmob gig and making a music video. The bands were charged with activating their online fanbase to view, comment, rate and vote, with the winning act curating and hosting a special gig in their home city.

The results

- 10.6m total video views (against a target of 7m).
- 56,000 public votes on the content.
- An estimated 83m total 'impressions' for the campaign overall.
- A YouTube masthead used to promote the series saw a public interaction rate of 11% (against a predicted 3%).



5. Key insights

- Branded content can be more effective than TV spots alone
- Combining branded content with traditional advertising can be more powerful
- Exciting branded content can drive interaction
- Branded content can be created for multiple territories
- Branded content makes what may seem impossible possible

About the author

Andrew Canter is CEO of the Branded Content Marketing Association (BCMA), the global trade body for branded content and is designed to bring together and benefit a broad spectrum of content creators and owners including organisations from the advertising, brand development, sponsorship, media, broadcasting, programming and entertainment industries.

The BCMA strives to promote and grow the branded content market to the wider audience. Celebrating its 10th anniversary, the BCMA is an international body with chapters in North America and Russia.

The “Best of Branded Content Marketing” is an enhanced multimedia eBook. It has been produced by the BCMA in partnership with Justin Kirby (DMC) co-author and editor of "Connected Marketing: the viral, buzz, and word of mouth Revolution" (Butterworth-Heinemann) and Mark Welland (New Media Works). DMC and New Media Works are strategic partners. DMC are a digital marcoms consultancy, specialising in more connected and collaborative approaches to business and marketing. New Media Works is a digital design consultancy and app developer. More great examples of Branded Content are featured and the eBook is available to download free on iTunes.



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