

Branded Content Special

# smart

Why ad funded programming? 4 T-Mobile case study 8  
Value of an interaction 10



**MEDIACOM**

**MEDIACOM**  
beyond  
advertising

**CAMPAIGN'S AGENCY OF THE DECADE**

# Introduction

## What is branded content?

The definition of branded content has evolved hugely in the last five years in line with the proliferation and digitisation of content delivery channels. Its essence though, remains the same: branded content is any form of content that carries a brand's logo, message and/or values. It can take many different forms on a multitude of platforms, including TV, AFP, mobile, social media and many more.

## What's in it for brands?

Cut-through: in our hyper-fragmented digital world consumers control what, how, when and where they receive content. This creates a well-documented issue for traditional advertising effectiveness, as ads struggle to maintain historic levels of cut-through. By integrating a brand or product into or around a piece of content, advertisers can mitigate against this declining effectiveness as levels of engagement with branded content tend to be higher.

ROI: studies have proved that the additional level of engagement advertisers get from branded content often delivers higher ROI when compared to traditional forms of advertising. Our proprietary econometric analysis demonstrates it can be up to 3.2 times more effective than traditional advertising.

Longevity: branded content can deliver advertisers unrivalled links with popular, potentially global properties. It can influence the

properties' content, provide access to established talent, and if activated successfully, generate a host of valuable distributable digital content. All of this means that often the impact of a piece of branded content goes far beyond the short term benefits.

## How do you get started in branded content?

Whether you create your own branded content property from scratch or you mobilise consumers to create content for you, great branded content ideas are rooted in your communications strategy. There are three basic stages to branded content.

### Stage 1: establish the role of branded content.

If you can answer yes to any of the following questions you should consider branded content:

Do you have a complex message to give (one that can't be told in a 30 second advert for example)?

Do you need to position or reposition your brand?

Do you want to develop a dialogue with your target audience?

Do you want to create or own assets for distribution?

### Stage 2: to get the right people in the room.

From the outset, involvement from key stakeholders – marketing team, creative agency and media planners – is key to developing the right idea for branded content. To ensure the idea plays to your brand's values, is

integrated in your overall communications strategy, delivers value for money and exploits every channel fully, each party needs to contribute in some form to the branded content development.

### Stage 3: plan, plan, plan.

As any good pilot will tell you, the secret of a good landing is a good approach. And this certainly applies to branded content. Successful branded content requires tight planning, resource and coordination to execute properly. In addition, one of the main watch outs for branded content is the regulations which vary depending on the type of content and platform for delivery. From restrictions on what you can say in TV sponsorship, to product placement legislation, to editorial guidelines, to digital rights management - great care must be taken to ensure compliance at each stage.



## Ad-Funded Programming on TV: right for your brand?

Ad Funded Programming (AFP) on television does what it says on the tin. It is audio visual content for TV, funded (either in part or wholly) by a brand. It is becoming increasingly attractive to all parties, in part due to the increasing, pressure on commercial broadcasters programming budgets, but also because it enables brands to step outside the advertising clutter to get their message across. It is no longer restricted to late-night youth and sports programming: better slots are opening up for AFP and the programmes are now just as likely to be about knife crime, mental health or even cervical cancer as they are about cooking for kids or re-homing dogs.

AFP takes advantage of our fragmented world by providing an entertainment or information experience that is relevant to the consumer but carries the brand's message or values woven into the content. It is this depth of experience and engagement that makes AFP unique and is the reason that brands often use AFP to either communicate a deep/complex message or to entertain them and win their affection in order to boost consideration.

### How to do it?

Great ideas for AFP can come from anywhere – the brand, agencies, production companies or broadcasters. What's important is to develop, produce, deliver and

distribute those ideas in such a way that they remain at the heart of campaign strategy – working for the consumer, the brand and the broadcaster alike. Successful content will always be a three-way partnership between the brand, media owner and producer. So, it's vital from the start that each fully understands the others' needs, and why they're involved.

### The Process

Developing top-line thoughts with a production company requires the needs of both the audience and the brand to be tightly interwoven. With over 800 independent production companies in the UK, each with their own strengths and weaknesses, there needs to be an experienced hand to help find, brief and contract the company that's right for the project. Involving media owners early also saves time, effort and potential disappointment as they know what works for them and their audience. Just because it might be coming to them free doesn't mean they'll take it.

It's worth taking time developing the idea: this is when all parties can contribute, ensuring good foundations for the programme are laid. Then, armed with a treatment, budget, schedule, draft contracts and activation plan, the brand can decide whether to go ahead or not.

### What Are The Rules?

Branded content on TV is governed primarily by two rules laid down by Ofcom:

- Rule 9.4 prohibits a sponsor from influencing the content and/or scheduling of a programme in such a way as to impair the responsibility and editorial independence of the broadcaster.
- Rule 9.5 prohibits promotional references to the sponsor, including its direct or indirect interests in a sponsored programme. It goes on to say that any non-promotional references must be incidental and editorially justified.

These rules reinforce the importance of producing AFP as a true partnership between all parties. Full and frank discussion during development means the brand should be confident that the production company and media owner are alive to the brand's sensitivities and have a clear understanding of the campaign's aims and reasons for funding the programmes.

## AFP: Secrets of Success\*

- Clarify how the AFP fits into an overall marketing/comms strategy and have clear brand objectives
- Know who you're targeting – always gauge the compatibility of the content with the market
- Consumers are spoilt for choice, so your choice needs to spoil them. The programme should be unique and compelling.
- The programme should be based on things that matter to the audience
- Leverage the deal at every opportunity – make the programme part of the deal, clearly itemising other assets available to you in the contract – otherwise expected assets may not be budgeted for, or cleared for use.
- Allocate the resource necessary both operationally and financially to make the most of the opportunity.
- Pinpoint what success looks like - conduct research to ensure objectives are being met and new routes forward explored.

*\*based on over 30 AFPs produced by MediaCom Beyond Advertising*

## Radio

Branded Content, AFP, Sponsorship & Promotions or Non-Spot Solutions: however you choose to identify it, it's a growth area for Radio.

In the last four years the industry share of non-spot revenue has risen from 15% of all radio billings to over 20% in 2009. Much of this has been driven by a continued improvement in creativity, integration with other media, and most importantly a willingness for rival radio groups to work together to deliver bigger and better solutions.

MediaCom led this sea change in commercial thinking by bringing together the major groups (Bauer (then Emap) and Global) to deliver the first radio promotion with one prize delivered across both groups; the campaign for Egg was also by far the largest single promotional prize ever (£100k), and as Jane George, the Brand Manager at Egg, said at the time, "the level of engagement – callers, texts, online hits – was higher than we have ever experienced"

Since then, we've continued to push boundaries and innovate and have subsequently seen similarly large and dynamic promotions for several brands including Sky. Econometric data showed that one of these campaigns, outperformed some of Sky's more core response-led media, driving a top three cost-per-response across the six month period measured.

Non-spot works in a number of ways, but essentially its strength lies in the editorial endorsement of the brand by the radio station and how the brand is woven into the fabric of the station in a way that is more readily accepted by consumers.

This endorsement comes at a justifiable premium to airtime spots, as it's the stations themselves that create the activity, script and produce the work, and it's their unique relationship with the consumer that brands are piggybacking.

It's not just big cross-sales house projects

that work either. Specsavers, Nandos, Met Police and GSK have worked with smaller budgets and fewer stations and achieved exceptional results.

The future offers an opportunity to secure fantastic creative work, measurable results and added value from non-spot work, as radio groups have more flexibility with non-spot inventory than traditional spot airtime.

This doesn't mean that groups will start giving it all away, but it does mean that volume commitments tend to solicit more value, as radio companies have guaranteed money on their books and more fine creative work to showcase.



**Charlie Yeates**  
020 7158 5825  
[charlie.yeates@mediacom.com](mailto:charlie.yeates@mediacom.com)



## Event Sponsorship

As brands using event sponsorship have become more sophisticated, so the levels of activation and accountability have increased accordingly. There is less of the chairman's whim approach to sponsorship and more of the due diligence and rigour that has been applied to media buying in the past.

The more sophisticated brands are looking at the sponsorship investment as the foundation for a broader communications platform.

When Sky were considering a sport to invest in as a sponsor (rather than as a broadcaster), they undertook significant due diligence before deciding on cycling. However, the investment into cycling (the bought part of the communications mix) simply provided the catalyst for a wide-ranging and ambitious plan to drive success in cycling from the elite teams to increased public participation. It is a bonus that British Cycling has been incredibly successful, but that success does not change the fact that Sky want to motivate 1 million more people in Britain to cycle over a five-year period.

Sky have bought content in the shape of elite cyclists competing in Sky branded kit.

They own content through the mass-participation Skyride events they have created and staged across the UK, and they are now earning content through the newly launched Sky pro-cycling team. The success of the investments will be measured against awareness, understanding and participation. The activation strategy in support of the sponsorship is significant and sophisticated, and encompasses a broad range of differing media channels.



**Charlie Dundas**  
020 7158 5993  
charlie.dundas@mediacom.com

## Broadcast Sponsorship

Broadcast sponsorship is often used to deliver cut-through and to position or re-position a brand. It achieves this through a combination of high frequency, alignment with the broadcast programme content, and the additional promotion that comes with it.

Smart amplification of the sponsorship will turn a simple broadcast sponsorship into more of a broadcast partnership. These deals can include options for VOD, interactive (broadcast and online), mobile, trade promotions, event, merchandising & POS. The broadcast programme becomes the hub around which all other promotional activities can spin, giving additional opportunities for targeting and dialogue for the brand. To enable this activation a licence is required. Many broadcast sponsorships come with this licence, but in cases where the broadcaster does not own the property it can often be purchased from the production house for an additional fee.

### Amplifying Your Broadcast Sponsorship

Whether you decide to amplify or not, broadcast sponsorship has shown it can deliver significant ROI improvements over and above traditional spot advertising. In fact our econometric analysis shows that it can be up to 3.2 times more effective than TV spot activity in terms of ROI\* – especially helpful if budgets do not stretch to TV spot advertising.

*\*Source: Business Science*



**Louise Brown**  
020 7158 5750  
louise.brown@mediacom.com



## T-Mobile

**T-Mobile's advertising was struggling to cut through. We threw out the rule book, created a dance event that became great content for people to pass on, partnered with YouTube to provide a platform for them to do so, and made T-Mobile a genuine word-of-mouth phenomenon. And this wasn't just a stunt – it led to genuine business success.**

### **Background - A Need for a Fresh Start**

T-Mobile had fallen well behind the big three in the market: O2, Orange and Vodafone. People didn't know what the brand stood for, we had less money than our competitors, our advertising wasn't cutting through, and O2 were reaping great rewards with their Priority initiative. The old model of advertising new tariffs just wasn't working - we needed a fresh approach that would create some excitement around T-Mobile, get people talking about the brand, and win back some customers.

### **The Big Idea - Great Content To Pass On**

If you ask people what they love about having a mobile phone, they constantly talk about being able to share interesting or unexpected things that happen to them in their everyday lives - by calling, or texting, or (as increasingly happens) recording and passing on photos or video. So we decided to create an event that would give lots of people

something unexpected to participate in and share, and which would make great content that a much wider audience would want to watch and pass on to their friends. What better activity to get people involved in than dancing – anyone can do it, it's infectious, it's great to watch when pros do it, and ever better to watch when people with two left feet try. And what better medium than YouTube for us to partner with to provide a platform for people to share the content.

### **Making It Happen - Everybody Dance Now**

The event featured 350 dancers who startled commuters at Liverpool Street station by breaking into a choreographed routine, and hundreds of people couldn't help joining in. Soon after the event, footage was making its way on to YouTube, as people shared the surprise with their mates and anyone else who wanted to watch. We created a film of the event which premiered on TV just 36 hours after the shoot.

Our 2½ minute film ran during Celebrity Big Brother and was introduced from within the programming by the C4 announcer, which increased the sense of "event". The end-frame directed viewers to our sponsored YouTube channel, which became a busy home for user-generated content, as many people spoofed our film, recreating the dance event in other unexpected places. To maintain momentum, we added "making-of" films and

celebrity virals, and gave people the chance to download the film via Bluetooth from digital poster sites, and pioneering aggregator technology allowed our channel to feature the best dancing footage from across the whole of YouTube.

### **Results - A Genuine Word-of-Mouth Phenomenon**

Viewing increased during our C4 film premiere from 3 to 3.5 million. The film has been watched on YouTube over 12 million times with nearly 12,000 comments from consumers. Our sponsored channel is the most viewed in the UK of all time, and the second most viewed globally. There are now more than 50 Dance Facebook groups, the largest of which has over 4,600 members. With 95,000 downloads in just two weeks, it was the most popular Transvision Bluetooth campaign to date. And most importantly, store footfall in January was the highest ever for T-Mobile, with handset sales increasing by 22% during launch week.

This new media strategy represented a brave move for us and was a resounding success. Not only did we capture the imagination of the nation but we also delivered for the business.



**CLIENT QUOTE**

*"This new media strategy represented a brave move for us and was a resounding success. Not only did we capture the imagination of the nation but we also delivered for the business"*  
*Lysa Hardy, Head of Brand and Communications, T-Mobile UK*

## Measuring the brand impact of interacting with online content

It seems logical that interacting with advertising content online should result in deeper engagement with a brand, and procure a more favourable effect on brand metrics compared to standard online display advertising. However, to our knowledge, little or no research actually existed to test this theory or quantify how the level of interaction/time spent interacting would impact on a brand.

**MediaCom Beyond Advertising (MBA) and Real World Insight carried out a pioneering research project to investigate. Our first case study was based on one of GSK's brands.**

### Our Approach

**1,500 respondents** were recruited from an online panel and split into five groups matched on demographics and category usage (to allow like-for-like comparisons across the groups):

- **Three 'content' groups were instructed to visit a mocked-up MSN page and interact with a branded jigsaw game for either 30, 60 or 90 seconds** after which the game ended.
- **The 'display' group was instructed to visit a mocked-up MSN page featuring a standard format display ad for the same brand.** The session was timed out after 30" max or if a respondent clicked away from the page.
- **The 'control' group was instructed to visit a mocked-up MSN page with no advertising for the brand in question.** The session was timed out after 30" max or if a respondent clicked away from the page.

After visiting the respective MSN page, respondents answered a series of brand metric questions, allowing us to understand the impact of their online experience.

### Headline Results

Interaction with online content resulted in significantly higher spontaneous awareness of the brand compared to those exposed to the display ad and the control group.

Moreover, length of interaction had a multiplier effect, with each incremental 30" of interaction further lifting brand recall.

Purchase intent was also affected favourably by interaction with content. Time spent interacting was particularly important here, with the group that interacted for the longest (90") demonstrating significantly higher levels of purchase intent than the display and control groups.

### RWI Comment:

*Our results conclusively demonstrate the high value to a brand of getting consumers to engage with advertising content. Moreover, the greatest worth to the brand lies in the depth of interaction.*

*Our case study used a forced-exposure approach, meaning there was no inherent bias whereby people interacting with content might already be pre-disposed to a brand.*

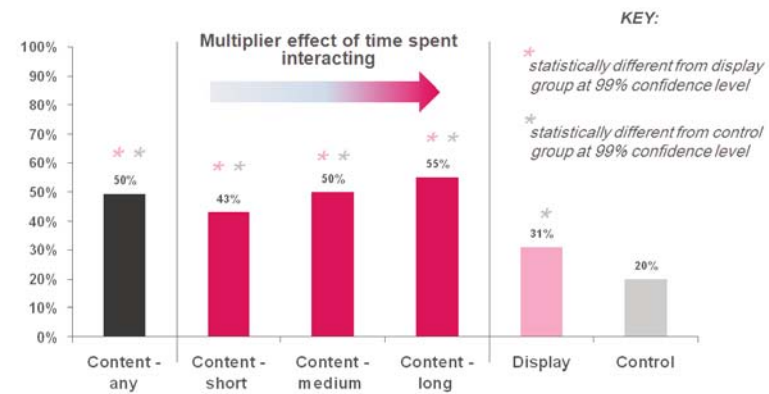
*However, a recent bespoke campaign analysis project (carried out for another MediaCom client) demonstrated that our findings do also have integrity in the real world. Results corroborated our theory that the deeper and more layered the interaction, the more positive consumers were towards the brand.*



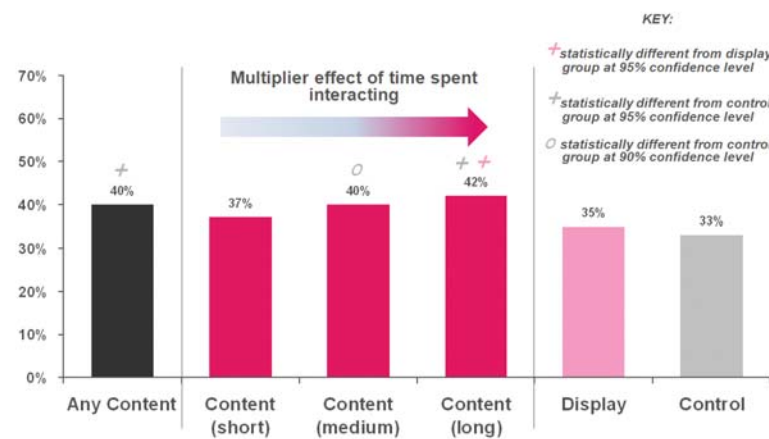
**Pauline Robson**  
020 7158 5630  
pauline.robson@mediacom.com

# Noticeboard

## Spontaneous Brand Awareness



## Top Box Purchase Intent (% 'Very likely' to purchase)



■ As content creation, distribution and evaluation continue to grow in importance in channel planning among our regional teams and International clients, we intend to roll out MediaCom Beyond Advertising capabilities internationally this year with support from the MBA centre of excellence in London. Pan-regional roll-out will also mean additional capabilities in the MediaCom London International team to develop content-centric approaches for inclusion in pan-regional channel strategies as well as local market implementational guidelines to provide best-in-class execution across multiple territories.

### ■ How do you use Branded Content to improve your search results?

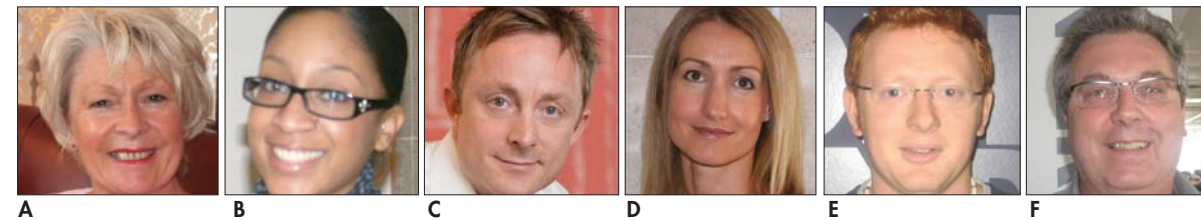
Simple. Google ranks content above commercial results. We took this thinking and applied it to IKEA. IKEA did not feature on the consideration set when people were considering kitchens, yet once people sampled an IKEA kitchen they realised it was of high quality and low cost. MBA proposed using branded content and a sparkling new magazine-led kitchens site, The Kitchen. The content on The Kitchen had an IKEA feel but is not IKEA-led, therefore not directly pushing sales messages. Instead, we are using content to prove expertise, honesty and value to deliver "The Most Useful Kitchen Site in the World". By optimising the content for search engines, we will push IKEA into the no.1 and no.2 spots for Google and other search engines. We believe this will deliver the consideration that IKEA needs to become a leading Kitchens brand.



For further information about MediaCom please contact:  
**Nigel Robinson**, Head of New Business & Marketing  
MediaCom, 124 Theobalds Road, London, WC1X 8RX  
Tel: 020 7158 5500 e-mail: [nigel.robinson@mediacom.com](mailto:nigel.robinson@mediacom.com)

*We don't just talk about branded content - we do it!*

Can you match the MediaCom employees to their close up from the MediaCom Calender? Answers below



Answers 1E Chris Kellaway 2D Fiona Walford 3F Mac Stephenson  
4A Penny Logier 5B Rochelle Brade-Martin 6C Stefan Bardega

MediaCom

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

