

Multi-platform media brands work harder than single-platform media

Media brands which extend onto several platforms such as magazines, online, mobiles, radio and so on work even harder for the advertiser than brands which are only on one platform.

Emap Advertising conducted a study in the UK called Engagement Squared. It was based on interviewing over 3,000 consumers about their multi-platform media consumption and their response to advertising campaigns. This was supplemented by parallel qualitative research.

Consumers who use a media brand on more than one platform spend more time with that brand, and have a deeper connection with it, than consumers who only experience the brand on a single platform. For example Kerrang, which began life as a magazine only, now spans many platforms. Among Kerrang users who only use one platform (e.g. read only the magazine) 52% agreed it is a 'cool' brand, whereas 72% of those who interact with Kerrang on more than one platform agreed it was 'cool'.

Similarly among FHM consumers, 66% of those who only read the magazine thought it was 'funny', compared with 74% of those who read the magazine and visit the website. 76% of magazine-only readers thought the brand is 'sexy', compared with 87% of those using both magazine and website.

The research also found 'multiplier' effects for the advertising. A campaign for chocolate bar Snickers ran in Kerrang with the key message 'Snickers supports new music talent'. Among consumers who only used one Kerrang platform 68% agreed with the Snickers message, but among those using three or more Kerrang platforms 84% agreed.

In studying two other advertised products, Nik Naks snacks and Impulse deodorant, the Engagement Squared study suggested that ads using two platforms of the same brand could be more effective than the same weight of advertising spread between two media brands. Awareness of the ad messages was higher, and so was preparedness to consider purchasing the products.

These findings confirm the common-sense conclusion that the people most keenly in tune with a media brand's ethos are more likely to use the brand in more ways (magazines, internet, radio station, etc) than those less in tune with it. Multi-platform users are the most 'core' consumers of the brand, the keenest fans, the most engaged audience. Consequently an advertiser whose product fits a media brand's profile would do well to use that brand on more than one platform, because the campaign will be targeting the brand's most enthusiastic consumers – who are likely to be the most receptive to the advertising content.

Source: FPP

Public Relations vs. Journalism

The line-up of industry stars presenting at a recent Public Relations Congress in Dubai attracted dozens of PR practitioners, and more than a few journalists - representatives of two professions known for their oft-tense relations.

For all their rivalries, though, most Gulf-area experts in academia and the professional world agree that the pair can and should effectively collaborate.

"PR agencies and journalists are married where divorce is not allowed," quipped Sadri Barrage, chairman of the Middle East Public Relations Association (MEPRA) and managing director of Headline PR, in between his pair of presentations during the three-day conference.

"Journalists need PR people; PR people need journalists. Whoever tells you the contrary would not be presenting an honest and balanced view of the situation."

Wasted efforts

TV journalist Nima Abu Wardeh, who hosts BBC World's Middle East Business Report, said journalists "need PR to do their homework, watch the TV programmes, read opinion columns, etc. Find out if the (PR firm's) 'story' fits in with the mission of the programme."

However, she felt much of a PR firm's efforts are wasted. "Stop bombarding us with press releases. Most, if not all, are irrelevant, uninteresting and pointless," she said.

The keys to getting the message across include focusing on issues such as content and deadline. "Understand how we work, what we need," she said. "Deliver within our required timeframe."

Focus on the news

And such "news focus" is an acknowledged priority for PR specialists, according to Mijbil A. Al Ayoub, corporate communications and relations manager of the MTC Group in Kuwait.

"The media are our partners. Together we can both work on the betterment of our company," he said, stressing that when PR professionals approach journalists, the topic "should be a newsworthy event".

Some publishers acknowledge the challenge PR people face when finding a home for a story. "The task now for the PR industry," said Brian Scudder, director of Dubai-based contract publishing firm Switch Media, "is to find those quality publications that have recently emerged that do fit their target demographic."

Make the best of both

Dubai's media explosion means more jobs for students majoring in PR and journalism. So how do those from the two majors learn to work with one another?

"Journalists operate within professional norms of objectivity and public interest while PR practitioners seek to promote their organisations in different ways," said Dr Mohammad Ayish, dean of the College of Communication at the University of Sharjah.

Despite the differences, Ayish said, the two media forces can and often do "work together to serve both the public interest and the specific interests of organisations".

"News media need PR persons because they provide newsworthy information about developments of interest to the community," he said.

"PR persons also need the media because they provide viable communication outlets for the diffusion of their ideas."

Know the newsroom

Dr John King, associate professor of mass communication at the American University of Sharjah, urged PR majors to learn about the "culture of the newsroom".

King, administrator of the Tri-Cities Tennessee-Virginia chapter of the PR Society of America, suggested they intern on a newspaper just to understand how journalists work.

Remember

"Students in PR should watch TV news and read newspapers everyday. If you are not aware of what's going on in society, and how it's being presented, how are you going to be a successful PR person?"

Source: Gulf News

Middle East Publishers' Association (MEPA).

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