

IAB's Global Insights Report showcases digital marketing's boundless possibilities

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With only one day left to get entries in for next year's IAB Bookmark Awards, digital marketers have one final chance to seize the opportunity to showcase their hard work to a greater audience. Success in the digital space is no mean feat given the number of competitors and the unpredictable nature of the medium.

The digital space is exciting because brands can interact with consumers, instead of simply communicating a message. In a space where everyone has a voice, and some brands choose to target consumers with nothing more inventive than sheer repetition, it becomes challenging for products to stand out from the clutter. It is therefore no surprise that Google reports an ad click-through rate of only 0.06%. For this reason, the IAB releases an annual Global Insights Report to celebrate those marketers who manage to make their voices heard in a space where everyone is shouting, as well as to assess what works and why in the digital space.

"What we see with digital marketing around the world is that the most effective ads not only harness the latest technology to communicate a strong message over many relevant platforms, but that the message is tailored to react to both personal preference and global realities," says Josephine Buys, CEO of IAB SA.

An example is the "America is Beautiful" Superbowl commercial from Coca-Cola. Although Coke has made its brand synonymous with happiness, a bubbly and fun messaging approach does not resonate with an audience that is jaded by the current global climate. Therefore, Coke decided to equate happiness with the resolution of touch issues. The ad featured the well-known song, America the Beautiful, sung in different languages. The Superbowl ad was supported by a digital campaign where personalised versions of the video was sent to demographics such as LGBT, Native Americans, and parents, according to their Facebook data. It immediately became a top-trending topic on the social network. By equating happiness with inclusivity, Coca-Cola managed to strike the right chord with its target consumer.

The "Scandal Shave" campaign in China epitomises the ability of digital marketing to adapt almost immediately to a surfacing phenomenon and turn it into an integrated campaign opportunity. A video was placed on the internet of popular Chinese actress Gao Yuanyuan helping a man shave and soon became a media story of a "good-girl-gone-bad" image change. Gillette jumped on the opportunity and hired the actress as its first-ever female spokesperson, backed up by an online competition where the winner would be shaved by Yuanyuan. It reached 237 million people in two months and led to the highest sales in Gillette's history for two consecutive months. The campaign was a roaring success because it seamlessly integrated celebrity, entertainment, product placement, and social networking.

The Heineken "#ShareTheSofa" campaign seized on the second-screen phenomenon, whereby television watchers use a mobile device to access supplementary content or apps. The beer maker launched a second-screen show on Twitter and Vine to allow fans to watch the game with their legends and ask them questions. The campaign attracted 1.2 billion media impressions from 94 countries and, most importantly, beer sales went up by 7% during the campaign. This campaign harnessed the insight that second screening is growing exponentially and turned it into the first real-time football show designed for the second screen. This, in addition to providing fans with the opportunity to interact with their heroes, led to an extremely successful outcome.

"From the entries we have received so far, it is clear that local digital marketers have also found a knack for combining the latest emerging online trends with local relevance to create successful campaigns," says Buys. "We look forward to another excellent Bookmarks in 2016, where the best in our industry will no doubt prove again that we are on par with global excellence in digital marketing."

Fortunately for those who have left their entries late, the IAB SA website provides an online form that facilitates an easy submission process. The form can be accessed at: <http://iabsa.net/bookmarks/>

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