



Marketing Messages

MARY CHARLESON

Let the digital marketing games begin

The last 50 years have been about mass marketing and one-way communication. But consumers have changed and many don't trust advertising anymore. They've been lied to and faked out. Ads have become like wallpaper - seen but not remembered. And consumers have become savvy. Media can no longer be the cracks between the content. Enter digital marketing. Digital is the ultimate mass and individual marketing all at once. And because digital content is social, encouraging connections between people, it becomes the content.

The future of advertising? There isn't any.

Well, not quite. But the future of traditional advertising vehicles will not look like the past. Although billboards, transit, TV, radio, print and direct mail ads will still be present, they'll be used to create synergy with digital media in some form. Progressive companies are currently doing this in growing numbers and with measurable success, an attribute likely to foster further growth, with increasing pressure to justify advertising return on investment. We are entering a time where marketers are simply assessing their objectives and target market, and then selecting the best tools for the job, be they traditional, digital or a combination of both.

Petro-Canada's recent Olympic glassware promotion is a great example of how integrating online and traditional media can reap huge success. With a nod to the past, the 30 second TV commercial states, "It was 1988, the Calgary Winter Games, when the country came together to support Olympic athletes, with glasses," says the voiceover. "Isn't it time to do it again? It continues. "Buy the glass and support Canadian athletes, only at Petro-Canada." The voiceover and music audio is reminiscent of a homey Hotel 6 spot, as it pans the cupboards and garage shelves where some of those 1988 glasses now reside. The use of TV is obviously aimed at mass reach, likely best to connect with Canadians over 35. But they also utilized social networking through Facebook for an online campaign. The company offered free 'virtual' versions of the glasses that Facebook users could send their friends as gifts. Petro-Canada donated 50 cents for every virtual glass passed along to support Canada's Olympic athletes. Their goal was to donate \$50,000. Their gift giving number spiked to 70,000 in the first day and they had achieved their goal of 100,000 virtual gifts within three days. Most of the Facebook givers were women drivers aged 18-34. The online campaign was aimed at creating buzz for the actual glassware which retail for \$3.99 half of which is donated to support Canadian athletes. The Facebook application allowed them to connect with individual Canadians, and then use their personal network of friends to share the content to a mass number of people. Brilliant.

Forgetting Sarah Marshall, a romantic comedy launched last year that followed Peter after being dumped by Sarah utilized both traditional and digital media in a clever way for its launch. They could have just posted a movie trailer to Youtube, bought print ads and waited at the box office. Instead, they embarked on a transit campaign as a teaser to drive people to the website. Bus ads stated, "My Mom always hated you Sarah Marshall." Transit ads went further, "You do look fat in those jeans Sarah Marshall." Each ad posted a website at the bottom. Once at the website, people could get to know Sarah and Peter, learn each side of the story, look at posted photos, video and exchange thoughts and advice through the website and blogs. As a teaser campaign, it was not known to be a movie at that point. People thought they might be engaging in relationship advice of a real couple, albeit one with a messy, public and expensive media glorified breakup. The point is, traditional media drove traffic to the web, where viewers then followed the story and engaged with others using social media. When the movie actually launched, they had already become participants in the story and of course they went to see it. The movie grossed over \$100 million globally.

The future of advertising? There IS one. It just doesn't look the same as in the past. And you can count on it engaging digital media in some capacity.

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Mary Charleson, President of Charleson Communications, is a marketing strategist, speaker, and consultant. She writes monthly and can be reached at mary@charleson.ca