Eyeball Time: Buy 30 seconds, engage 3 minutes?

By Kevin Bassett   19 Jul 2012

If you're told you can buy a 30-second advert and get three minutes of eyeball time for free, you're going to ask how. And the likely answer? "Engage the audience. Obviously." (With or without exasperated eye roll.)

But it's not so obvious, actually. That hackneyed mantra has lacked any indication as to "how" this is to be achieved since its first academic proclamation. In advertising, "engage" can mean anything from entertain to irritate - but what do *we* want "engage" to achieve?

We want people to engage *with the brand*. So, let's make it clear: for our purposes, engage means making the audience want to know more.

If the "more" is easily accessible, and if the 'more' is good, you should get 6 times the viewing time for which you paid. Taking all this further, in a world dominated by cellphones, easily accessible means mobile. And smartphone browsing = mobi-sites. Finish and klaar!

Proof by numbers

The O2 mobile network released research on 29 June '12 (http://bit.ly/MxZZhW) revealing that, "...smartphone users spent more time browsing the internet (25 minutes a day) than: social networking (17 minutes a day), playing games (13 minutes a day) and listening to music (16 minutes a day) than they do making calls (12 minutes)."

(S)end (M)obi (S)ite

If mobi-sites are providing the "more", then an SMS contact detail with an auto-response SMS is the courier delivering the right mobi-site, to the right phone, at the right moment. This means easy access to the "more" - anywhere, anytime for anyone.

Mobile South Africa

A mobi-site specifically designed to support an advert (called a micro-site) is no longer an optional extra in the marketing mix - it is a powerful source of information for a consumer at the instant of engagement. And right now it's a marketing differentiator.

World Wide Worx, quoted in *Business Day* (10 May 2012), predicted more than 10 million South African internet users by

the end of 2012, and that 94% of these users will be able to access the internet on a mobile device.

Currently, only 20% of the population are able to browse the internet but Howzit MSN has said that our broadband capacity is going to increase 10-fold by next year. This means exponential growth in the number of people who will have access to web content on their cellphones.

But to earn their keep, mobi-sites need exposure. The subliminal flash of contact details in the last nano-second of a TV ad doesn't cut it. Currently, if mobi-addresses are on ads only brand ambassadors with advanced PVR skills read them. And how many of those are out there?

Massage 'more' eyeballs

How?

- Design a hot mobi-site and brief ad creative to send it to some eyeballs
- Make sure contact details (especially the SMS number) aren't the small print. Make them obvious. Make them count.
- Use the auto-response message to a SMS enquiry to deliver the mobi-address directly to the customer's mobile device, so that one click opens a world of info.
- Finally, measure your media ROI by the SMS hits it generates.

Come to think of it, why not amp up your advertisement evaluation by using mobi-site hits to measure which ads are water under the bridge and which are bringing in the bacon...?

ABOUT KEVIN BASSETT

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