

MOBILE

What brands can learn from Volvo's award-winning creative: Digital execs

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Volvo revved up customer interest with a virtual reality test drive

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NEW YORK – Digital executives at the Mobile Marketing Association's SM2 Innovation Summit 2015 Sept. 29 discussed the importance of bringing mobile innovation to each sector to boost the potential for eye-catching creative, naming Volvo's recent virtual reality test drive as one of the best examples for other marketers.

During the "Insights from The Smarties Jury Room" session, the executives discussed several major brand campaigns that nabbed top honors at the 2015 Smarties Awards, while highlighting tips and best practices for churning out optimal marketing efforts. Consumers respond best to campaigns that offer real utility and incite actual emotion, two aspects that were clearly seen in Volvo's virtual reality test drive application.

"When I was reviewing the different submissions, it was very late one night," said Kristen D'Arcy, vice president of global digital at **Coty, Inc.** "This one was so exciting for me, and even after viewing every single submission, this was incredibly memorable to me.

"You're talking about a luxury product with a price tag that is not insignificant. Luxury consumers want an experience and they want something that's differentiated."

Thinking outside the box

Marketers in every industry, including retail and automotive, must develop out-of-the-box solutions when undertaking mobile marketing efforts. Volvo's award-winning campaign asked consumers to download a particular app several weeks prior to the release of a new vehicle, and shipped Google cardboard virtual reality sets to those users' homes.

Consumers could then choose a route, slip on the headset and take a virtual drive in the car, allowing them to be the first to test it out before it hit the mass market. The campaign garnered more than 40,000 test drives and 238 million public relations impressions.

Volvo enthusiasts were able to use mobile in a way that offered real utility as well as a memorable experience. It was this bridging of the physical and digital world that resulted in all of the new Volvo vehicles selling out within two days of official release.

"It was essentially democratizing technology," Ms. D'Arcy said.



Volvo offered a tangible experience for consumers with smartphones

The execution of the campaign prompted many consumers to want to experience the virtual test drive. Additionally, the use of Google cardboard was not a gimmick; instead, it offered consumers a piece of tangibility in which to ground the experience.

Another notion that marketers should keep at the forefront of their minds is to create campaigns that fundamentally require a mobile device and cannot be done on desktop.

The Smarties Awards also honored the Owlet Baby Care app, which helps users keep track of their baby's movement during the sleep cycle and alerts them of any irregularities. The app's technology would not be well-suited to a desktop, and also offers consumers the ability to move around while staying connected to their child.

"From a creative point of view, it's really well done," said Daniel Bonner, chief creative officer at **Razorfish Global**. "Well-being and health can be a challenging place to be."

Brands must ensure that their organizations are equipped with the necessary infrastructure to roll out such mobile-first initiatives.

Bridging physical and digital

Another best practice for brands is to continue bridging the gap between the physical and digital world via mobile. Mobile is able to yield valuable data that can then be used to transform customer experiences into something more personalized.

The Red Cross Connection app was a prime example of this, as it asks consumers to sign up and indicate their blood type, later sending alerts when its supplies of particular blood types are running low. Users may respond to the alert and personally donate, or disperse the call-to-action across their social media networks.

Donors are also rewarded, which boosts their feelings of self-worth.



The Owlet Baby Care app is best-suited to a mobile platform

Ultimately, marketers do not have to introduce fancy creative to capture the attention of their consumers. Sometimes, a simple idea is much more effective and will go the distance.

Brands should have clear corporate goals as to where their priorities lie with mobile, and also must locate a best-fit agency partner. This makes it easier to collaborate on goals.

“If you think your industry or sector can’t innovate mobile, you’re wrong,” said Hans Helbig, global head of digital marketing at [Reckitt Benckiser](#).

Final Take

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