

RESEARCH

Top trends across 2015's award-winning mobile campaigns: report

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L'Oreal's Makeup Genius app

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In an analysis of 2015's award-winning mobile marketing campaigns, Millward Brown and the Mobile Marketing Association found that the best efforts tended to embrace mobile innovation and immersive experiences to connect with audiences on a deeper level.

Millward Brown teamed up with the Mobile Marketing Association to pinpoint the key mobile trends found across finalists for the MMA Smarties and Cannes Mobile Lions competitions. Key trends include the rise of virtual and augmented reality, how micro-video is being stitched into a longer narrative and social's strength at super-charging interactivity.

"Overall I think there was an increased level of sophistication in the approach marketers were taking with their mobile strategies," said Sheryl Daija, chief strategy officer at the MMA. "They were also being bolder with experimenting using formats like augmented reality to create more immersive experiences for their consumers.

Building relationships

Winning mobile marketing campaigns use mobile to deepen the relationship with an audience, according to the report, 2015 Mobile Marketing Trend Report.

The report found that 30 winning campaigns and 17 finalists had improving the brand experience and deepening engagement as a goal.

For example, Gatorade partnered with schools in Guatemala to change the sedentary routine of children, using an education app.

In another example, Samsung created the Backup Memory app to those with Alzheimer's, providing patients with real-time reminders of whom they are talking to.

Within the relationship trend, there are several common themes: Facilitating social philanthropy via mobile; personalized two-way communication, and real-time gratification.

Social sharing

Winning mobile campaigns are also big users of social to super-charge interactivity and co-creation.

Twenty-one winning campaigns used social sharing and 14 finalists did so.

For example, EA Sports' Madden GIFerator saw fans create over 400,000 GIFs.

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Foot Locker's Horse with Harden enabled fans to create trick shots that had to be copied by an NBA player. It reached 61 million people due to strong earned media.

Multi-channel support

A third trend apparent in winning mobile campaigns this year is the support of other channels, with even mobile-centric campaigns relying on other channels.

For example, L'Oreal leveraged print and television to support its Makeup Genius app, which provides a new way to try on makeup by scanning a user's face so makeup can be tried on instantly.

The report found that winners are two times more likely than finalists to support their campaign with social and are three times more likely to use four media channels.

The report also found that technological innovations virtual and augmented reality are quickly maturing into a marketing trend.

For example, Volvo created a virtual reality test drive using Google Cardboard, enabling users to experience the XC90 months before it hit the showroom.

In another example, Oakely packaging was turned into a virtual reality visor so that anyone purchasing sunglasses could see through the eyes of the athlete that endorsed them.

Emerging opportunities

Another innovation trend is the beginning of the Internet of Things as a marketing opportunity. As a result, this technology is expected to evolve into a winning marketing tactic next year.

For example, Australian wireless carrier Optus created a smart buoy to alert lifeguards to the presence of sharks.

In another trend, marketers are leveraging micro-videos such as Vines to tell a longer story.

Gap did just this for its Spring is weird campaign by sequencing Vines in a 12-part micro series to tell the story of a relationship developing over the season with the retailer's spring line prominently featured

Lowe's used Vines to provide utility and relevance with #TapThruHowTo leveraging time-lapsed videos to show a project from beginning to end and step-by-step instructions throughout.

"Overall I think there was an increased level of sophistication in the approach marketers were taking with their mobile strategies," said Sheryl Daija, chief strategy officer at the MMA. "They were also being bolder with experimenting using formats like augmented reality to create more immersive experiences for their consumers.

"The power of mobile lies in the ability to bring marketers closer to their consumers than ever before and create deeper engagement and conversation," Ms. Daija said. "But there must be a purpose behind making this connection.

"It is critical for marketers to acknowledge this and work to really understand their consumers so they can deliver a more customized and personalized approach as well as support and encourage interactivity between the customer and their brand," she said.

Final Take

Chantal Tode is senior editor on Mobile Marketer, New York