

Personification of brands - how are marketers using digital media to tell their story?

By [Jessica Batt](#), issued by [VDX.tv](#)

17 Apr 2014

As all marketers know, a strong and powerful brand feels like a person coming to life. It has a voice, a personality and nuanced characteristics. But the first wave of digital advertising opportunities did little to support brand personification. Targeting was crude and clumsy, creativity limited by technology, talent and imagination and it was all about click, click, clicks (and unfortunately still is for some!). Brand marketing remained in the realm of TV, radio, print and outdoor.



Jessica Batt

But advances in ad-technology, rich media and online video formats, and the need to follow where the audience is in an increasingly fragmented media-scape, mean that today's digital marketing tools give brands significant opportunity to tell stories and develop their brand personalities. Social media, native advertising, data-driven audience insights, advances in contextualisation technology and video capabilities mean that whilst brands used to have to try and imagine what the voice of the brand could be, they now have multiple mediums to get their actual voice out there in a two-way conversation that simply wasn't possible pre-digital. But of course, as with any conversation, it has the potential to go both exceptionally well and exceptionally badly, with the added 'bonus' of it being played out in real time in front of an audience of thousands.

Smart brands, however, know that regardless of the potential pitfalls, they must engage in a continuous brand conversation across all media platforms. Consumers can now instantly see the difference between what a brand does and what it says; gone are the days of the divide between communications and services, marketing and corporate. Social media and the mobility of the internet create instant communications channels that enable statements and videos to go viral in a matter of seconds, eliciting instant feedback and dialogue, which can be harnessed for both good and bad. It has never been more important for a brand to act and react both honestly and holistically.

We've seen a wonderful example of this, this week with the inspired response by Honey Maid, makers of Graham Crackers in the US. They recently released a TV campaign under the "Wholesome" banner that featured gay, interracial and military families which incurred a host of negative responses from individuals and organisations. Instead of side-stepping, appeasing or prevaricating, the company hired two artists to use print outs of all the negative comments and sculpt them into the word Love and then surrounded them with the print outs of all the positive comments to make this powerful [video](#) (which had been viewed online almost two and half million times in two days at the time of writing). An important and interesting example of a brand using digital as a platform to reinforce its brand personality and extends a conversation with its audience of both haters and lovers. It feels like the entire company is telling a meaningful story through its actions and products, and not 'just' an advertising campaign.

So how can brands ensure that they are hitting the right note when it comes to their online conversations and branding activities? Well, first and foremost, we used to talk about content being king, but in this instance if content is king, then context is God (now a well known quote in the marketing world). Understanding the context in which the consumer is consuming content on each digital platform is key in order to tailor your message and deliver it at the right moment. And to

do this you need to fully understand what your target audience is doing online, what are their interests, what is their pathway from device to device and platform to purchase.

One of the biggest developments over the last few years that can help marketers do this is the advances in contextualisation technology, the availability of granular big-data and the new wave of data experts who have entered our industry to overlay analysis and insight in order to more precisely determine where and who the digital audiences is for a particular brand. The nuances and light and shade that data-driven insights can reveal can really accelerate and develop online branding campaigns. For example in one of the presentations from the iMedia Brand Summit it was revealed that The Cheesecake Shop in Australia discovered their audience was not only the expected audience of women with children, but was broader than expected with their online customers have a stronger interest in entertainment, cricket and romance movies!

And it is precisely these kinds of insights that an over-reliance of programmatic buying will fail to deliver. There is no doubt that programmatic is an efficiency tool that has its place, but for brands that are serious about extending a brand conversation to the right audience who will receive it in the right context at the right time then data-driven human expertise and analysis has to be part of the equation. Because as brands now have the ability, and the expectation from consumers, to appear as human as possible in their words, products, actions and responsibilities, it takes people to help them navigate the 24/7 mediums that make up today's advertising landscape. And when this is done smartly, creatively and in the right context the possibilities for and performance of digital brand campaigns are only limited by imagination.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jessica Batt is Exponential's marketing director across APAC, India and South Africa. Jessica is a strategic marketing professional with over 12 years' experience in communications, marketing and strategy both in Australia and the UK. She is knowledgeable and passionate about online media and the digital marketing environment and loves being part of an ever-changing industry.

" **VDX.tv releases 2021 holiday video advertising guide for brands and retailers** 22 Oct 2021

" **Household targeting's role in the cookieless future** 25 Jun 2021

" **Study from VDX.tv finds video advertising more effective across combination of CTV, desktop and mobile devices** 26 May 2021

" **How household targeting can improve engagement** 18 May 2021

" **VDX.tv releases a guide on 'advanced TV': What it is and how it can help drive results** 1 Jun 2020

VDX.tv



VDX.tv is a global advertising technology company that is transforming the way brands connect with relevant audiences in today's converging video landscape.

[Profile](#) | [News](#) | [Contact](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [RSS Feed](#)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>