B2B Marketing Awards 2012

Category number	14
Category name	Best SME-targeted campaign
Programme/initiative name	Transformation to Social Media
Agency	The Crocodile Integrated Marketing
Brand/Client	Ellisons

Category outline/criteria:

Category 14: Best SME-targeted campaign

This category reflects campaigns targeting business decision makers in small and medium-sized enterprises (those with under 250 employees). Submissions must explain the dynamics of the specific audience of audiences targeted by the campaign, and how the campaign offer, copy, creative and media was designed to appeal to individuals in these firms.

Summary

Ellisons, the UK's leading supplier to the hair and beauty industry (a small business audience, with all target companies less than 20 employees) wanted to increase online revenue by 50% and nurture customer engagement.

The Crocodile defined social media as the right strategy for this small business audience and was appointed to create and deliver a piece of transformational work that would embed social media into Ellisons' marketing and communications.

The Crocodile delivered a campaign over six months at a cost of £XX,XXX[1].

Key highlights are:

- Creation and empowerment of a social steering committee
- Use of two key channels to appeal to small business audience: Facebook and Twitter
- Programme of price-driven offers exclusive to Facebook and Twitter followers
- Content strategy designed to appeal to SME audience and
    - drive website traffic and transactions
    - encourage genuine dialogue
- Use of social channels for customer service and product testing

Key results exceeded all expectations:

- 71% increase in the value of online orders
- 44% increase in the number of businesses ordering online
- Incremental ROI of 1534%
- 36% increase in website traffic
- Facebook now 3rd biggest referrer to www.ellisons.co.uk

[1] These details were provided to judges in the original submission but are commercially sensitive and therefore confidential.

[MAIN SUBMISSION]

About the client company

Ellisons is the UK's leading supplier to the professional hair and beauty industry. Established in 1930, Ellisons offers c.12,000 products and operates three cash and carry warehouses. It also sells by telephone, mail order and via an e-commerce website.

Strategy - broader business issues the company is facing

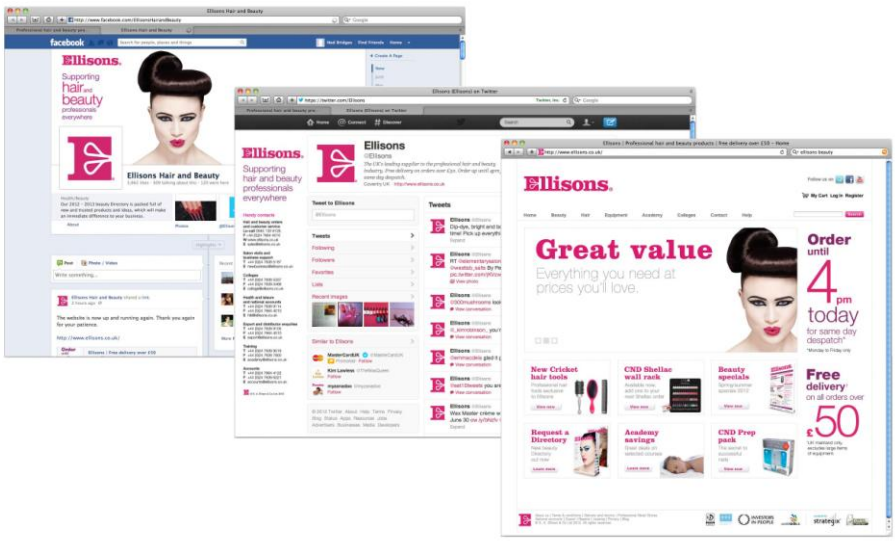
Following a change of ownership in 2009, Ellisons' managing director set a target for 2011/12 of growing online business by 50%.

Traditional supply methods (directory, phone and wholesale outlets) meant Ellisons was

- missing out on orders from businesses which preferred to purchase online
- missing out on potential cost-savings of an online sales model

However, there was a lack of awareness in the market about the Ellisons website and the benefits of ordering online.

The small business nature of this audience – and their profile in terms of online behaviour – is absolutely fundamental to the strategy of this campaign. They are actively engaged in social media, are using smartphones as an access tool, and are less responsive to DM and email campaigns than other B2B audiences (Ellisons had previously attempted "traditional" campaigns without seeing the uplift to online sales they were seeking).



Facebook and Twitter were selected as the primary social media channels

Objectives of the campaign

The campaign aimed to address Ellisons' marketing challenges by using social media to:

- Increase traffic to the Ellisons website
- Support core business objective of growing online business by 50%
- Drive a business transition to social media
- Build deeper, more valuable relationships with customers
- Increase customer engagement

The target audience

Ellisons' customers are self-employed, sole traders and managers/buyers for small salons with less than 20 employees.

Customers include:

- Sole traders running mobile beauty businesses
- Hairdressers renting chairs in salons
- Beauty/hair salon managers
- Beauty/hair salon owners

Customers are generally:

- Female
- Aged 18-45
- Not in an office during business hours
- Using smartphones
- Socially engaged
- Not as responsive to email as other B2B markets

At the small business end of the SME market, this B2B audience demonstrates a more consumer type behavior profile. This profile is key to the strategy, the choice of the social channels, the tone and style of the campaign content, and the price-driven nature of the campaign offers.

Media, channels or techniques used

Media channels

Twitter

Research showed there were significant numbers of UK hair and beauty professionals active on Twitter. Running their own small businesses these professionals rely on phones and word-of-mouth marketing – they are using smartphones and are on Twitter, so this is a relevant channel.

Facebook

With over 17m women on Facebook in the UK, 68% aged between 18-45, Facebook was a primary channel. The target market is actively engaged personally, plus sole-trader and small businesses are increasingly setting up business pages to drive their own business development.

Phase 1: Planning and enablement

We set up a social steering committee within Ellisons to get buy-in from staff and to encourage the team to behave in a social way. This included representatives from marketing, trading, customer service and HR. Team members became social champions within the business.

This phase included:

- Desk research to validate social media channel choices
- Social media training for the steering committee
- Defining the mechanisms for monitoring and measuring
- Optimisation of social profiles
  - Ellisons had profiles but they were not managed and weren't on-brand
  - The Crocodile took over the profiles, created rules and minimum standards for posting, and redesigned them to meet brand guidelines
- Proactive follower acquisition activity
  - Twitter followers increased from 300 followers to 2,256
  - Facebook grew from 500 "Likes" to 2,917
- Embedding of social CTAs across the business, including customer facing material and email signatures. The telesales team now promotes Facebook and Twitter on calls

Phase 2: Campaign execution

Content strategy

To directly address the core commercial objective, The Crocodile developed a content strategy promoting the benefits of ordering online.

Including links to drive traffic, engaging in conversations and fielding queries from followers and fans, running competitions and offers. Price-driven offers were chosen to appeal to the cost-conscious small business audience and this was key to the success of the programme.

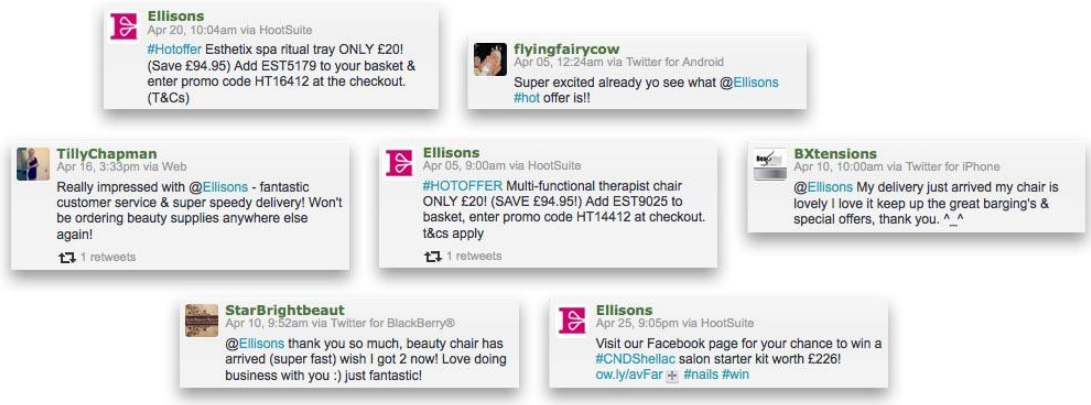
We used hashtags (#AskEllisons, #waxwednesday and #hairtoday) to theme tweets and foster genuine social behavior, successfully encouraging ongoing dialogue.

The Crocodile was responsible for all content creation and execution: tweets, responses, posts on both Twitter and Facebook. The tone and conversational style of the content was designed to both reflect Ellisons' core brand and to appeal to the small business audience.

Execution

This phase included:

- Offers, competitions and polls
  - 'Hot Offers' exclusively for Facebook and Twitter fans. Weekly offers attractively discounted (and as a bonus usually stock the trading team wants to shift!)[2]
- Encouraging customer service support using #AskEllisons hashtag
  - Making it easier for small business operators to engage customer services via a medium they're already using and allowing them to consolidate their communications in their own chosen channel.
- Proactive use of social communities for demand testing new products
  - The trading team has started to ask the community for feedback and opinion on products and pricing before deciding to stock them.
- Canvasing for votes in the Beauty Guild Awards using Facebook and Twitter – leading to Ellisons first ever award!



Exclusive 'Hot Offers' and competitions are used to drive customer engagement

[2] See Appendix for information about offer metrics and optimisation based on results and feedback

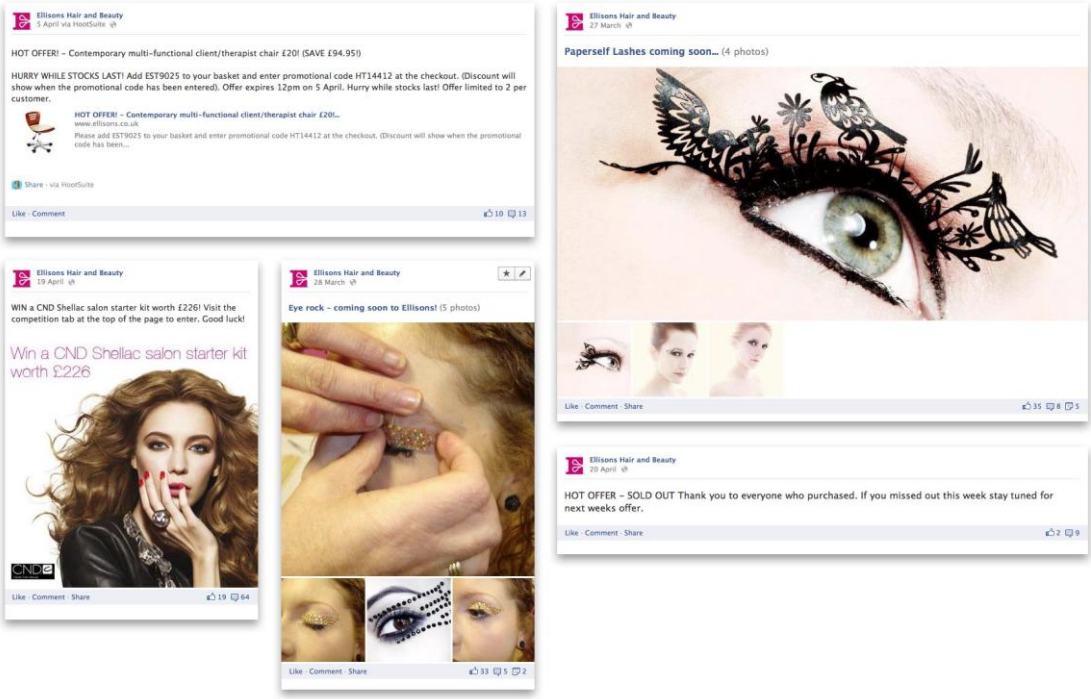
Timescales of the campaign

The Crocodile was appointed in November 2011 on a six-month basis to define, oversee and manage Ellisons' transition to social media.

Phase one (planning):	Nov-Dec 2011
Phase two (execution):	Jan-Apr 2012
Hot offers:	weekly
Competitions:	monthly
Steering committee sessions:	monthly
Reporting:	monthly

Budgets

These details were provided to judges in the original submission but are commercially sensitive and therefore confidential.



Facebook is used to preview products and test demand, as well for exclusive offers and promotions

Results

All objectives met and exceeded::

- Online sales values up 71% over six months (against a 50% target)
- 44% increase in the number of businesses order online
- Incremental ROI of 1534% - income directly generated from the campaign[3]
- Revenue from the January Online Sale up 84%
- Website traffic up 36%
- Facebook now 3rd biggest referrer to www.ellisons.co.uk after Google and Bing
- Enhanced customer service, new level of customer insights
- First ever supplier Beauty Guild Award

Note: Following this successful campaign, we're thrilled that Ellisons has retained The Crocodile's services to continue to work with them on social media for at least the next 6 months.

Client testimonial

"The campaign's unequivocal commercial success comes from its execution being so well targeted to our small business customer base. We discovered they were already engaged in Facebook and Twitter so were open to us when we started a dialogue with them there too.

The importance of the right tone of voice and the right look and feel – along with the provision of exclusive great value weekly offers and promotions, was critical to our customers engaging. Within our market these people are tough to reach. Through this social media campaign, we now have the attention of more than 6500 individuals within our target organisations."

Geoff Morris, Managing Director, Ellisons



Graph showing increase in social referrals to www.ellisons.co.uk during the campaign period (Nov 2011 – April 2012) compared to the number of social referrals during the six months prior to the campaign (May 2011 – Oct 2011)

[3] Without negatively impacting other sales channels – which have continued to grow in line with targets

[SUPPORTING MATERIAL]

Supporting material

1x presentation board

Appendix

Additional material or images that do not form part of the main submission can be placed here.

From footnote page 6:

Optimisation based on results and feedback:

The success of the weekly Hot Offers was monitored using Facebook Insights and Google Analytics. The activity was optimised based on the results and on comments received. For example, an offer that was restricted to one per customer required people to spend twice the offer value in order to qualify for free delivery. A number of Facebook fans complained about this restriction – and it performed badly compared to previous offers. A quick decision was made that on lower value offers customers would be allowed to buy more than one item... and the uptake increased, along with positive feedback from Facebook fans.

Submission ends