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B2B Marketing

The Evidence:

Exclusive preview

In association with

About the report

In 2012, the volume and quality of entries for the B2B Marketing Awards was up again, and together they formed a compelling body of evidence that B2B marketing works and, perhaps more importantly in this day and age, can be shown to work.

In previous years, the award-winning case studies have been published by B2B Marketing. This year, for the first time, the shortlisted entries have also been independently analysed to form *The Evidence*, a collaboration between B2B Marketing, Peter Young (independent chairman and marketing consultant) and Decision Point.

The report aims to identify the best evidence of marketing success from across the B2B Marketing Awards 2012 entries, and share what has been achieved in a way that helps the B2B marketing community build on these successes.

The following pages contain an exclusive preview of the report. The full report will be launched and published at the B2B Marketing Awards Showcase on 5 March 2013.

About B2B Marketing

B2B Marketing is the comprehensive information resource for B2B marketers. Its mission is to provide practitioners with the information they need to perform better and achieve more, whatever sector of the B2B space they are operating in.

Launched in 2004 as *B2B Marketing* magazine, it has since evolved into a multi-faceted resource, delivering a broad range of content in a variety of different forms and formats. Its key products are:

- Online community
- Magazine
- Awards
- Research and reports
- Training and events
- Membership

For more information on any of these products or services go to b2bmarketing.net or call +44 (0) 20 7438 1370

About Decision Point

What buyers want, when they want it and how they work with you is changing rapidly. Better informed, they are harder to reach and even tougher to convince. In short, you are no longer in control of the sale, it really is a buyer's market. Decision Point finds better answers to the new buyer agenda, helping businesses get inside the change by mapping and understanding key decision points and communicating more effectively to drive purchase decisions.

We are B2B specialists, with a track record that runs from venture backed tech firms to global corporates. Put simply, we help organisations better meet their customer needs and win more business. We like to think of it as reinventing B2B, one client at a time.

To find out more visit decision-point.co.uk or contact Graham or Drew on +44 (0) 20 7924 7222

Migrating to inbound and digital marketing

The question
Budgets are tight this year and we have no room for marketing to experiment. What is the right balance between the tools we have always used and newer digital approaches?

The context
Markets do not stand still. It's estimated corporate buyers now have access to 20 times the amount of information they had only five years ago. The Corporate Executive Board concludes that 57 per cent of the purchase process is now complete before the buyer even speaks to a salesperson and as a result traditional sales and marketing approaches are proving less and less effective.

"Fifty-seven per cent of the purchase process is now complete before the buyer even speaks to a salesperson and as a result traditional sales and marketing approaches are proving less effective"

Inbound and digital marketing have grown exponentially in the last five years, and 2013 is likely to be the year content marketing becomes mainstream. Early adopters point to some significant achievements in the shift away from so-called interruption marketing to inbound marketing and the tools can give far greater transparency through improved metrics. But any change is hard for an organisation, especially where investing in new techniques or technology requires you to stop spending on those that have worked in the past. This is especially true where the new approaches can take time to build momentum and will exert significant new demands on the team.

The answer
The right balance is one that gives us the greatest confidence of delivering the agreed objectives. If we keep doing what we have always done then we are likely to see diminishing returns as markets and competition do not stand still. If we are to deliver growth, then we need to find new ways to engage the target audience, replacing the weakest traditional programmes with more targeted, accountable and lower cost solutions. For most businesses, these new approaches will be digital.

The evidence
When British Gas wanted to reach out to its SME audience, it turned to digital as the key platform for delivering its message. Research showed 57 per cent of SMEs believed their energy suppliers use too much complex jargon, with 34 per cent calling for simple explanations in everyday language published as an easily accessible guide. However, these are busy people who don't really want to think too hard about energy and are cynical of any claims made by supply companies. To engage them, British Gas Business targeted SMEs with campaigns that balanced conventional communications (advertising, print and PR) with two new digital platforms:

- **Business Energy Insight** used short customer video documentaries on YouTube to explain how SMEs were saving energy using British Gas' new smart meters and support services.

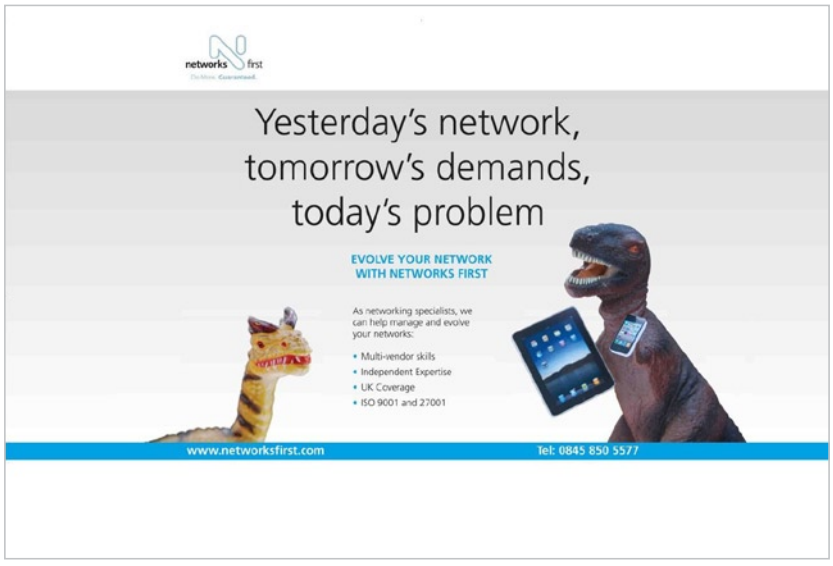
- **Energy Made Simple** involved a new area on the main company website designed exclusively to demystify how the energy industry works, explaining in simple terms, energy basics, what makes up the cost of energy, billing and contracts, and how to save energy.

"Filming costs can be kept low using no actors, no expensive props and an iPhone with royalty-free library footage"

The Business Energy Insight project delivered 65,000 inbound website visits and 25,000 customers that signed up to the service. Over 50 per cent of traffic to Energy Made Simple was driven by natural search as the content addressed questions buyers were asking but could not get answered. When they arrived, visitors spent six times as long on the content as they did on other areas of the corporate site. The result was an engaged audience, sales objectives delivered and an opportunity for British Gas Business to demonstrate it was prepared to be open, honest and transparent with its customers. By aligning digital with traditional communications, the campaigns contributed to a significantly improved reach and brand perception in the target audience.

Low-cost video

Video was also used by Networks First, its objective was to stand out in a crowded market where IT buyers are distinctly jaded by vendor claims and counter claims. Building on the idea that Networks First helps customers evolve their networks; the business adopted a multichannel PR and marketing campaign around three humorous, low-budget videos featuring a trio of plastic dinosaurs. The campaign had to raise awareness of Networks First's expertise in solving network-related issues including the shift to cloud computing, network convergence, mobility and the rise in employee use of personal devices in the workplace.



Best limited budget campaign winner: 'Dinoverts' for Networks First by Marketing Options International

The target audience was technically literate and the campaign did not require a particularly glossy execution. As a result, costs were kept low as there were no actors, or expensive props and the film was shot on an iPhone with royalty-free library footage of explosions to illustrate disastrous IT decisions. The three films cost less than £10,000 to produce and were viewed more than 1300 times on launch. Perhaps, more importantly, the 'Dinoverts' helped this small business cut through with additional traditional media that have then amplified the message.

"The right balance is not about adding a digital element to an otherwise traditional campaign, but in exploring what can only be achieved in a digital world"

Computer Weekly's 'Downtime' blog cheekily described the first video as "One man, one camera, one voice and three plastic dinosaurs – not exactly Avatar," before going on to say… "If only RIM had seen this a week ago, the BlackBerry service outage may well have been avoided." Computer Weekly has 350,000 monthly unique visitors.

Computer Reseller News' (CRN) editor, Sara Yirrell, wrote: "Networks First has produced a hilarious video starring plastic dinosaurs. However, the video has a serious message to highlight the pressures being faced by IT departments." CRN has 500,000 monthly unique visitors.

A fourth dinovert was produced by 'mashing up' footage of the dinosaurs with talking heads of Networks First spokespeople. The video won Information Age's award for 'Innovation in Marketing and Communications' in April 2012, gaining coverage on the Information Age website (monthly unique visitors: 50,000).

The videos were supported with direct mail, email, and other sales resources. The campaign delivered a 37 per cent increase in unique visits to the Networks First website over the previous year.

Sometimes, the right balance is not about adding a digital element to an otherwise traditional campaign, but in exploring what can only be achieved in a digital world.

Passionate online following

In a world of commoditised and lower priced products, Scotsman Ice Systems needed a way to sell more ice machines to foodservice consultants, equipment distributors and dealers, and end-user restaurants and institutional kitchens. Social media monitoring, revealed that Scotsman Ice Machines – specifically its nugget ice (also known as sonic ice) – had a passionate following online:

- 1600 tweets mentioning 'sonic ice'
- 105 Facebook pages and 370 Facebook groups devoted to sonic ice
- 310,500 people self-identified on Facebook liking chewable ice pages
- Forum, IceChewing.com, had 1805 posts, 539 topics and 3731 members.



Best use of social media campaign winner: 'Luv the nug' for Scotsman Ice by Gyro Cincinnati

"By creating a digital community for consumers to celebrate nugget ice, Scotsman helped increase ice machine sales by double digits"

The consumer buzz about chewable, nugget ice is extreme in these social media venues. Scotsman rallied and aggregated nugget ice fans in the social media realm around 'Luv the nug' – a single message and destination of adoration for nugget ice, sponsored by Scotsman. This digital community gives passionate 'ice chewers' shareable tools to show their love and demand for nugget ice – petitions, swag, nugget ice; even the chance to win their own machine. While campaign results are confidential, the 'Luv the nug' online community has shown itself to be highly engaged and active.

By packaging up this demand, Scotsman fed its sales and distribution channels with analytics that supported the premise 'When you sell Scotsman Nugget Ice, you actually drive demand and return visits to your restaurants.' By creating a place for consumers to celebrate nugget ice, it helped increase ice machine sales by double digits.

Achieving recognition

Professional services firm Bluewolf recognised this and with an internal campaign (#GoingSocial) aimed to increase internal and external collaboration through the social web. By unlocking the knowledge and expertise of its employees and developing the online personas of internal thought leaders, Bluewolf sought to raise the profile of the total brand.

Over 300 employees were trained on social media platforms, and specifically encouraged to use Twitter, LinkedIn, Salesforce Chatter, Google+, Facebook, Flickr and Pinterest. As the social profiles developed, Bluewolf used them on its own website, effectively empowering staff to manage their own brand and thereby the business brand. Through Salesforce, employees managed their own profiles, showcasing their social networks, recent tweets, musings and published work together with a range of other biographical information.

Employees earned rewards and recognition by collaborating internally on Chatter, improving Klout scores, creating content for the knowledge base, publishing blog posts, sharing Bluewolf content, driving traffic to the website, etc. The initiative was considered a huge success internally, gathering recognition from key industry analysts and in driving inbound opportunities from social media engagement. Overall, social traffic to the website is up 45 per cent and inbound traffic to the main blog is up over 80 per cent. Over time, this is expected to translate into greater awareness and opportunity pipeline.

Data points

In closing this chapter, it's worth noting that not all audiences are yet available and engaged online. In this situation, the challenge is to find a way to translate the immediacy and relevance of digital thinking into a more accessible environment. IBM achieved this with its 'Business analytics' campaign, which brought dynamic content to The Executive Channel – a digital display network that delivers a real-time mix of live news, relevant content and full-motion display advertising in more than 100 of London's most prominent corporate buildings.

Using its long relationship with the Wimbledon Championships, IBM used data and statistics from every point of every match at Wimbledon 2012 to predict the outcome while the match was being played. This was an excellent showcase of IBM Analytics, interrogating over five years of Grand Slam tennis data, amounting to around 39 million data points and presenting the data in real-time as the situation evolved. The campaign used these tools to analyse player data and identify the 'keys' to each player's success. 'Keys' were then used to make real-time predictions on whether players would win or lose. Analysing live game data, IBM predicted results across the tournament with a 93.8 per cent success rate; driving a central message, "If IBM analytics software can predict results in tennis then imagine what it could do for your business."

The exact campaign results are confidential but the call-to-action: Search: 'IBM Tennis' contributed to a 67 per cent CTR; nearly five times higher than the previous year and overall cost-per-click dropped by 30 per cent in comparison.

With a little imagination, digital and inbound techniques can be used to replace campaign elements that no longer perform, either as standalone tools or integrated to increase the impact of the whole message.

"It's worth noting that not all audiences are yet available and engaged online – the challenge is to find a way to translate the immediacy and relevance of digital thinking into a more accessible environment"

Further reading

Best integrated B2B marketing campaign
Winner: 'British Gas Business – Energy live campaign' for British Gas Business by OgilvyOne, CHI, Carat, iProspect, Rufus Leonard and Blue Rubicon.

Best limited budget campaign
Winner: Networks First 'Dinoverts' for Networks First by Marketing Options International.

Best use of creative
Shortlisted: 'British Gas Business – Energy live campaign' for British Gas Business by OgilvyOne and CHI.

Best use of customer insight
Shortlisted: 'British Gas Business – Energy live campaign' for British Gas Business by OgilvyOne and CHI.

Best use of digital techniques or technologies
Runner-up: 'IBM Predictions' for IBM by OgilvyOne.

Best use of social media
Shortlisted: '#GoingSocial' by Bluewolf.

Winner: 'Luv the nug' for Scotsman Ice by Gyro Cincinnati.

Best website
Winner: 'British Gas – Energy made simple' for British Gas Business by Rufus Leonard.

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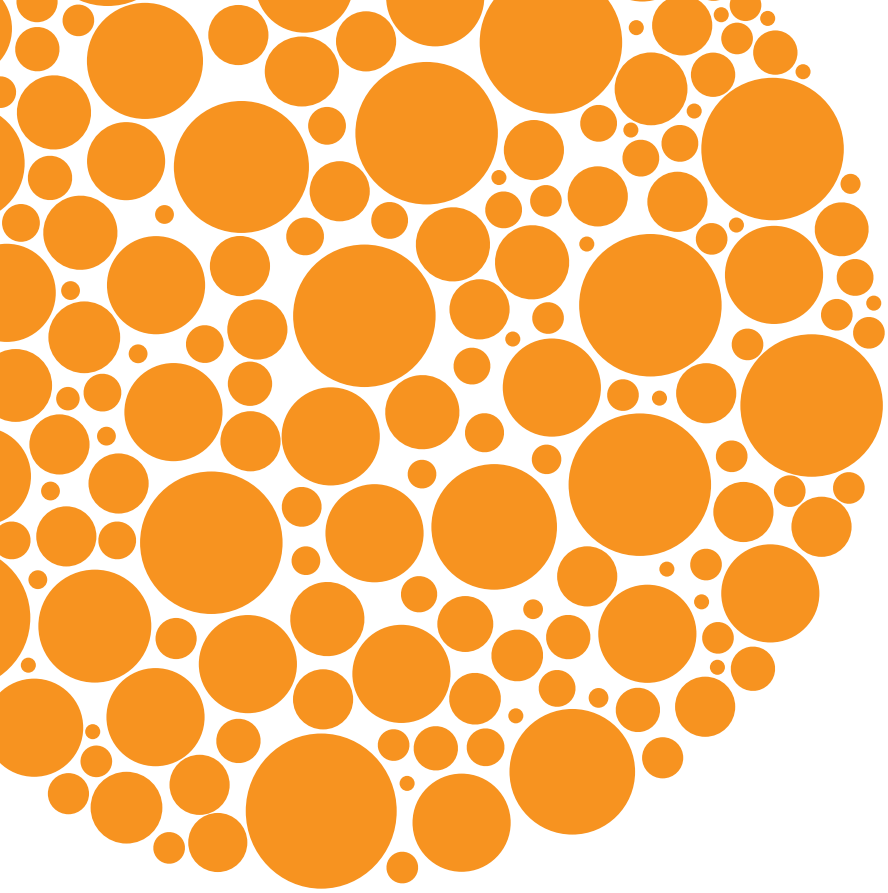
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