

# Add mobile experiential to the tool kit



*John Maybury*  
Marketing

**F**ive years ago campaigns in the experiential space were short tactical after-thoughts to the PR budget. Three weeks and \$500,000 later, the brand manager was left with a few graphs, consumer quotes and some pics of some often-dubious ambient activity.

From the consumers' perspective, their brand went public for three weeks in their lunch hour, lavished them with some glossy brochures, tasty treats or freebies and then claimed it cared about them. But what about the rest of the year? Given the constant changes in consumer behaviour and technology, it's now imperative for brands to have an ongoing conversation with their customers. A 12-month strategic experiential marketing program should be part of every marketer's armoury.

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all know about MMS and video calling, but are people really using these tools the way they use SMS? Is the technology up there yet or is the cost prohibitive? How do we address the privacy issues? What about ROI? While questions remain, there's no doubting that the winners will be those mar-

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keters who gain first mover advantage in this new space.

In Australia to date, most mobile marketing has been via SMS promotional activities. But it's about to get a whole lot bigger as the likes of colour screens, cameras and third generation platforms improve interactivity and enhance the experience. Experiments with User Generated Content (UGC), capable of taking the brand experience into another realm, are being closely monitored.

Mobile partnering with experiential means that capitalising on a positive brand experience can be instantaneous.

Bluetooth technology, which enables bar

codes to be sent to mobile phones with specific offers to drive purchase, will make it easier to measure the effectiveness and ROI of experiential campaigns.

Location-based activity enables static displays to be transformed into an interactive experience with images, content or video

uploaded immediately to a mobile device. Created content enables it to be sent on to friends and colleagues as WOM/viral communications. Here, the perception of the sender as an opinion leader who is trustworthy, experienced, reliable and credible will increase the acceptance and likelihood of acting on the WOM/viral experience. Positive consumer response to an emailed video or emotive story is well documented.

This technology is easy to understand. If you can work your way around a mobile phone, then you can incorporate these tools into your next campaign. The secret is keeping it simple. For the punters too.

Imagine inviting a customer to an experience on the street, in a mall or at an event, sending them relevant data or imagery direct to their phone and they send it on to other friends, amplifying the experience.

Given that WOM is primarily an online conversation, monitoring the effectiveness of the response to the campaign is possible through the use of tools like SEER. However measurement is only as good as the brand experience. Clearly defined campaign objectives with specific and measurable with KPI's across all touch points are an essential component of experiential executions.

If all our stars are aligned then this measurement will give the brand the impetus it needs to boost marketer interest and investment in this exciting new space. Understanding promotes growth so the move from tactical campaigns to a longer strategic approach backed by numbers is inevitable.

I'm looking forward to my favourite brands featuring regularly in my lunch hour, feeding my love for them, talking to me, talking back at them, exciting me about where they're going and delivering what I know they do already.

*John Maybury is brand activation director at George Patterson Y&R, Brisbane. ■*

## Time for a rethink on hiring new staff



*Amanda Imber*  
Recruitment

**B**efore you get into this article, I want you to take a minute to reflect back on how you were recruited for the role you are now in.

If you're like most people, you were probably shortlisted by a recruiter or headhunter, invited in for a 'chat' with the person who would later become your boss. And if you happen to be in a senior position, you probably had 'chats' with the entire management team at some point.

Indeed, I recently heard a story about one mid-sized advertising agency who made job applicants come in for up to seven chats with various levels of management. Not surprisingly, they lost the interest of many potential job applicants along the way. Surprisingly they are yet to change their recruitment process.

So what good is achieved through these chats? If you are on the recruiting side, chances are you probably get a good feel for people during these chats, although first impressions can be very

misleading. You probably get to hear about some of the award-winning campaigns the applicant worked on, in which they were, of course, instrumental. And you might even get to hear about their extra curricular hobbies.

In summary, after a series of chats with someone, you might know that they come across very friendly and confident, they were instrumental in creating the Earth Hour campaign (even though in

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reality, someone else came up with the idea and they only stepped in right at the end to implement a couple of tactical executions when the main team was away), and they like to hang out on Bondi Beach on weekends.

But take a step back from all this if you will and ask yourself what are the most important qualities for staff to possess that will set your agency apart from the rest? Arguably, the ability to think, both creatively and strategically, must be near the top, if not in prime position. So

why then do agencies not test for this in the recruitment process? Sure, creative directors ask to see creatives' 'books' and planning directors and heads of client service probably ask about past campaigns people have worked on. But this doesn't really tell us anything given that almost always, campaigns are very much a team effort and it is often impossible to know how much input the candidate actually had.

Instead of endless chatting, agencies need to change their recruitment process in order to bring in better staff. Agencies need to gear the process around testing applicants for how well they can think.

This can be achieved in a number of different ways. The simplest approach would be to leave candidates alone in a room for half an hour with a communications problem that the agency is currently struggling with. Take away their lifelines (i.e. their mobile phone) and leave them with a pen and a piece of paper.

Come back into the room after 30 minutes have passed and ask them to explain their solution, but most importantly, ask them to describe how they arrived at the solution. Indeed, this will provide the most insight into their thinking style and ability.

For something a bit more involved, ask the candidate to solve a problem, but ask them to do so in conjunction with a couple of their 'to be' team members. This process will not only give you a feel for how they think, but also how well they collaborate and work with a team to solve problems.

For a more formal approach, there are many 'puzzles' that are frequently used by some of the world's most innovative companies when they recruit. To find some examples, take the time to read 'How would you move Mount Fuji', which exposes how Microsoft and many Silicon Valley start-ups go about recruiting the best, brightest and most creative thinkers.

So the next time you set out to recruit a new staff member, place priority on working out whether the applicant can think, as opposed to whether they like surfing down at Bondi.

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