

## Case study

# Coca Cola – Wayne Rooney viral marketing film

### Key takeouts: Consumer to consumer messaging can increase reach

Creating content your consumers want to forward to their friends helps marketers extend the reach of their messaging without having to buy media space. This example shows how.

Run date: **June 2006** Territories: **UK / global** Agency: **AKQA** Digital disciplines: **Online media, viral marketing, social media**

## Background

Coca-Cola needed to find a way of leveraging a celebrity endorsement to gain cut-through in a tough market. The brand was looking for a technique of messaging that would gain real attention, connecting to the right people and in the right way. The peer referral power of viral marketing offers this promise, but in most cases proves elusive for fast moving consumer goods firms. However, this short video starring English football legend Wayne Rooney - proved compelling enough for millions of people to want to send this on. It's the kind of connection all viral marketing sets out to make but rarely delivers.

## Objectives

There were a broad range of objectives behind the campaign.

- Boost brand image
- Boost message association around the World Cup, ahead of the campaign
- Achieve cut-through to a target consumer that had increasingly tuned out from classic media

Given the nature of the medium and the model, it's likely there were additional objectives around the testing and evaluation of new channels within digital marketing.

## What they did

Written and devised by AKQA, this short film was created to pre-launch Coke's main World Cup Campaign. The main campaign included massive television activity and heavy integration between channels, but at its heart was a simple idea everyone can relate to: playing about with a football and keeping it up in the air.

This was the theme used in the viral video placed on YouTube. The style of the video is reportage; a behind-the-scenes filming of a more formal promotional film shoot.

## How they did it

It was released two weeks before the tournament began. As the first game of the cup kicked off, it had already been seen by over several million people. Later it was featured in The Sun, both in print and online, and it was picked up by ITV and broadcast during their flagship, prime-time World Cup 2006 programme to an audience of over two million people.

Coke-Rooney fever spread globally through numerous blogs, social networks and chat rooms. Consumers were happy to engage, and the messaging was accelerated by the background talk about the World Cup in all

media channels. This created the right environment for the spread of the message.

The film has been shared online on video websites and on mobile phones, and fans have been seen trying to emulate Rooney's remarkable moves.

## Evaluation approach

Viral video clips can be measured in quantitative ways that track the number of impacts, reach and in some case frequency. However, in social media spaces like YouTube, the volume of comments can also be tracked, and the language explored for brand affinity measures.

More proactive measures of market research can track the brand effect, by asking consumers who are exposed to the viral key brand image questions and then comparing their answers to a control group.

## Results

Over 8 million people saw the video clip which began online and was boosted with a small television exposure. Coke-Rooney discussions spread fast and generated a buzz and discussion that was harder to track, but clearly powerful for the brand.

## Integration

The pre-release of viral video content helped amplify the effectiveness of the television campaign. It laid strong foundations for the waves of marketing that would follow and created genuine offline discussion.

As the relationship between viral media and more traditional campaigns evolves, new ways are being discovered to let one feed the other. The edgy reportage feel and the way it was released created a sense that the viewer was in on a secret; YouTube gave the perfect way to share that secret with their friends.



## Academy Tutor comments...

"Coca-Cola struck the perfect balance between creating edgy and contagious content, and being on brand. The Wayne Rooney film hit the market just as interest in football boomed, and the platform of YouTube provided an effortless way for people to share the content with friends. Coca-Cola proved how celebrity endorsement can work in the less traditional environments of digital channels and the activity encouraged further viral campaigns throughout the company."