

Case study

Levi Strauss – Original 501 Button-Fly jeans – Jump

Run date: May 2008 Territories: US / global Agency: Cutwater Digital disciplines: Social media, viral marketing, online video

Key takeouts: Online films reach the right people and create discussion

Design video content with an online audience in mind> Create content people want to share and discuss. The challenge is to create video clips and programmes strong enough to be shared.

Background

A challenge Levi's have is that they compete not only intensively in store for market share among their target consumers, but also for the time and attention their consumers have when they are exposed to media. The brand needed to find a way to engage that would achieve cut through.

Objectives

- The objectives of the test were to:
- Boost front-of-mind brand awareness
- Achieve cut-through by delivering campaign messages between friends in peer groups
- Re-energise brand image
- Create discussion about the brand

What they did

The campaign team decided to create a video that would be so compelling as to get passed around between consumers. They developed a creative 'big idea' that spoke to core truths of the Original 501 Button-Fly jeans brand: strength, durability and the buttons themselves.



How they did it

They brought in the writer/director Benzo Theodore, the videographer on the cult "Jackass" television show and approached the viral with similar process, budgets and attitude to that with which a brand would approach mainstream television.

The video was filmed in Venice Beach, California, and released on YouTube, initially with no link to the brand. The clip is just under two minutes and has a clear storyline and build, but no clear branding. The story reveals several guys leaping into their jeans and buttoning them up in ways you'd never associate with getting dressed.

The content is edgy, humorous, cool, and compelling to pass on.

Evaluation technique

Levi Strauss tracked the impacts by watching the volume of plays and explored some of the dialogue.

Results

In the first three weeks following its launch, the video retained consistently high rankings on YouTube, the primary distribution point:

- 3.5m views

Academy Tutor comments...

"The bar for viral marketing has been raised higher and higher over the last few years, but Levi's leaps it comfortably. Strong direction and storyboarding, combined with high production values take a great idea and make it infectious."

- 13,000 ratings on YouTube
- 15,000 comments

No data for brand metrics was available.

Comment

Creating a viral marketing campaign is a risk. Most brands don't have permission to play in this space, and most creative doesn't generate a strong enough response to get passed through a social network. During the last five years the bar has been raised very high for the viral effect to work, and big brands find it increasingly difficult to achieve pass-on.

By using the approach of the "Jackass" TV show, Levi Strauss created a piece of content which could slide into social networks easily, giving a smile to the person who receives it and kudos to the person who forwarded the link.

The decision not to brand the content as being from Levi's eased this process of transfer, but reduced the brand effectiveness in terms of message

All Comments (15219 total)

Show: [Help](#)

longtoes (3 weeks ago)

hehe.

tjn330 (3 weeks ago)

that's awesome, these guys are crazy!

dmill00 (3 weeks ago)

wow this video is so awesome!!!

schapirate (3 weeks ago)

.... howtf they do that

golemosworld15 (3 weeks ago)

unexpected, thats bordem at its best lawesome

sofakingretodddead (3 weeks ago)

insanneee.
aha parkour pants.

kepec06 (3 weeks ago)

Bizarre but cool. :)

association. Although the jeans are the hero in every scene, they are second place to the actors and the link to the brand is arguably a little weak. In the thousand of comments on YouTube, some consumers talked openly about how cool the guys were and how they should be picked up by a jeans brand, but the link to Levi Strauss seems to have been missed by most consumers.

Viral marketing places brands in uncontrolled social spaces so it's unclear what the end result will be. A film like this will be enjoying significant audience for a long time and is bound to inspire copycat videos so marketing teams need to be prepared for the consequences of what they start.

Watch the film and see for yourself:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=pShf2VuAu_Q&eurl

