

Best Overall: Pontiac's G6 Campaign

CLICK AND SEND

G6's smallest-screen debut revved dealer traffic—and brand image By Betsy Spethmann

It was six months after Pontiac's G6 sedan made its astonishing debut on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, a gift to each of the 276 audience members. Now General Motors wanted consumers to meet G6 in person. So Pontiac shifted to the smallest screen of all: cell phones.

The premise of the Catch a G6 sweepstakes was simple. Consumers sought out a G6, took a photo with their camera phone, then submitted the photo for a chance to win \$1 million in a random draw.

"We wanted to break through clutter of the road," says Pontiac Marketing Director Mark-Hans Richer. "Just the idea of looking for a G6 would get people's attention on the highway."

It was brilliant timing and targeting. Pontiac wanted a high-tech halo for G6, and camera phones were the chic new toy among Pontiac's target audience of affluent and technologically savvy adults. So Pontiac courted those in the crowd who had camera-enabled phones—and knew how to use them.

"It automatically put us in a better demographic," Richer says. Poised at the front edge of camera-phone adoption, Pontiac supported the two-week sweeps conservatively: mostly radio, a little spot TV, some print. "It was like a research project," Richer says. And no dealership P-O-P: "We wanted it more viral, with stealth."



Pontiac and its agency, Digitas, created a Web site with a schedule of events where G6 would appear, a dealer locator, and a "field guide" to help treasure hunters recognize the G6. (Visitors couldn't enter the sweeps online, though.)

Pontiac had about 40,000 G6s on the street, and another fleet on 3,000 dealer lots around the country. Rather than wait for one to drive by, a lot of consumers headed straight for a dealership.

"Dealers suddenly had a lot of people coming to the lot, so they started putting the G6 out front to make it more noticeable," says Victor Lee, VP-director of Digitas' promotions group. "That got even more traffic."

Pontiac's intent wasn't to drive dealer traffic as much as to build brand exposure, but "you dangle a million dollars and people will figure out how to get it done," Lee laughs.

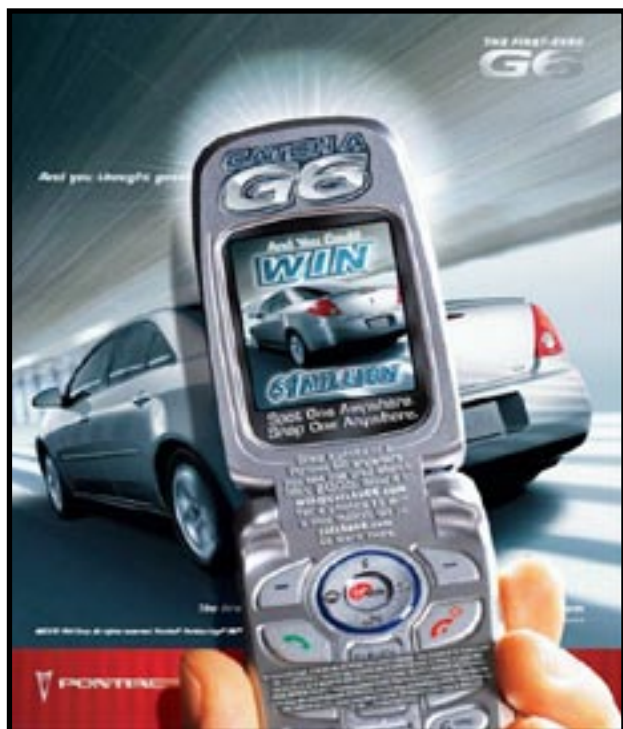
"We didn't explicitly tell consumers to go to dealerships, because the fun part was just looking for the car everywhere," Richer adds. "We hoped people would come to the conclusion on their own to visit a dealer."

Dealers were prepped through Pontiac's centralized communication system—standard practice for all pro-

motions. Pontiac worked with some dealer groups to set auto show appearances; other dealers added their own radio live-remotes or brought a G6 to local events for even more exposure.

Boston-based Digitas helped brief all dealers and customer-service center reps on the campaign as well as the car so they wouldn't be caught off-guard when consumers began clicking away. "Jumping into a tech-driven program, we wanted to deliver it accurately without hiccups," Lee says.

The questions kept coming until the very end of the sweepstakes ("Can I take the picture for them?" "Do they need to be in their photo?")—a good sign, says Lee, that dealers were genuinely engaged in the campaign.



Richer knew the campaign was working when the pictures started rolling in. "They were these great little slices of life from everywhere. I realized real people were out there, snapping away. It was neat to see these little true moments coming through."

Pontiac fielded 18,500 sweeps entries in two weeks. Many sent photos from dealer lots, but others snapped a G6 on the street, or in a parking lot, often holding their phone at arm's length so they could be in the picture, too.

The trickiest bit of execution was accommodating several wireless carriers. "We didn't want to limit it to one carrier; we wanted everyone to be able to enter without error messages or bounce-backs," Lee explains.

Entrants who answered an optional survey when they submitted their photo got a free G6-themed ringtone. That way, Pontiac learned that two-thirds of its participants had a "much better" opinion of the brand after the sweeps; that skewed even higher among younger men and higher-income households. (Fully 89% said it was their first wire-

less promo; 90% said they'd take part in wireless promos again.)

Web traffic jumped at Pontiac.com (up 425%) and its G6 page (up 354%), and Yahoo searches on the term "Pontiac G6" surged 151% in the campaign's first week. The promotion's dedicated site fielded 232,000 visits, a boon for brand exposure among consumers who "wanted to know more now that they had chased the car around the city," Lee says.

Pontiac took qualitative measurements, too. "How much did consumers go out of their way to participate?" Richer says. "We saw a good level of engagement in the pictures themselves—and I looked at each one."

Richer estimates that word-of-mouth—as photo ops drew attention from passers by, and entrants chatted with G6 owners—reached 55,500 to 92,500 people overall. He wishes they'd run the sweeps longer: Minimal media support meant a slow ramp up, but entries poured in towards the end and "could have tripled if we went another week or two. Live and learn."

Pontiac funneled entrants into its "rigorous" e-mail recontact program, but didn't follow up via cell phone. "We didn't want to violate their trust. It didn't feel appropriate to cold call them," Richer says. "We got them to look at our product, and for auto makers, that's the Holy Grail."

Best Viral Promotion

Gap Ambassador Program

CLIENT: *Gap*

AGENCY: *A Squared Group, West Hollywood, CA*

Good food, best friends and a free pair of jeans, Gap sure knows how to throw a party.

Consumers (college students and soccer Moms alike) took center stage last summer in a new marketing effort to boost Gap's new denim fits jeans and strengthen brand loyalty.

Feeding off consumers' affinity for the brand, Gap identified 100 women (19-48) in 10 markets—New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., Miami, Chicago, Denver, Dallas, Los Angeles and San Francisco—for its first-ever ambassador program. The goal? To leverage girlfriends' voices to introduce Gap products to others.



“We know women love to talk to other women about clothing,” says Julie Alonso, director of partnerships and events, Gap brand. “We wanted to tap into that viral, authentic energy that women have.”

The Gap Ambassador Program won Best Viral Promotion in PROMO's Interactive Marketing Awards for its ability to innovatively attract consumers while bolstering its brands.

Gap tasked experiential marketing company A Squared Group, West Hollywood, CA, to design an event (an exclusive cocktail and style party) to energize brand ambassadors and their friends about Gap products. To help incentivize ambassadors, Gap sent home welcome kits with custom gift bags. Monthly gifts from Gap followed in the mail.

“From the beginning, we wanted to immerse them in not only the Gap brand and the program, but to let them know this was an important responsibility,” says Amy Cotteleer, partner, A Squared Group.

During each party, attendees met with Gap stylists to find their perfect fitting Gap jeans while catching up with friends. Following the event, partygoers received a free pair of jeans (a surprise for attendees) and a Gap purse filled with goodies. The event drew more than 3,000 guests.

In all, Gap reported 97% redemption of 3,000 discount cards given to attendees and 20% redemption of 30,000 discount cards for friends and family. Redemption is still ongoing for Gap's Ambassador Membership Card. Since the program's inception last summer, Gap has reported 577% redemption of the 25% off card.

The ambassador program showed consumers Gap is concerned with more than just the bottom line. “It just opens up the dialogue,” Alonso says. “There's a reason to talk about us.”

While the parties are over, Gap's not finished with its ambassadors. Through August, the company will continue to send monthly surprise gifts and Gap news to its newfound brand loyalists. —Amy Johannes

SECOND PLACE: Microsoft OneNote

CLIENT: Microsoft

AGENCY: Mr. Youth, New York City

From apparel to software, New York-based youth marketing agency Mr. Youth took second place for Best Viral Promotion for its Microsoft OneNote Student Ambassador Program. Mr. Youth created a campus rep program to promote trial of Microsoft Office OneNote software (a notes organizer) among college students. The agency recruited two students from 50 colleges to generate buzz around the application. During the two-month campaign, Mr. Youth secured more than 80,000 trial version downloads—60% above Microsoft's goal.

THIRD PLACE: Knievel's Wild Ride

CLIENT: A&E

AGENCY: Civic Entertainment, New York

Civic Entertainment, New York, took third place for its A&E campaign on Knievel's Wild Ride. Civic designed an "advertainment" game to boost awareness of the premiere of *Knievel's Wild Ride* on A&E and generate a pass-along rate among players. The network worked with online gaming company Nstorm to create a free online motorcycle jumping game, featuring daredevil Robbie Knievel to reach casual and hardcore gamers, alike. In the game, the virtual Knievel performed tricks and jumped over objects. In-game advertising by A&E and Geico Motorcycle Insurance via billboards and in-stadium signage added realism to the experience. The game appeared on more than 200 online entertainment sites and more than 70 free gaming sites. As a result, Civic reported nearly 5 million plays and more than 285,000 send-to-a-friend e-mails.

Best Use of SMS/MMS Mobile Marketing

Catch a G6 Sweepstakes (see overall winner)

CLIENT: Pontiac

AGENCY: Digitas, Boston, MA

SECOND PLACE: Reveal Your Hidden Code

CLIENT: Scion

AGENCY: ePrize, Pleasant Ridge, MI

Toyota's Scion gave out 1.5 million decoders via magazines and auto shows; consumers used them at Scion.com to reveal instant-win messages for a car, or branded watches, backpacks, hats. Players gave a cell phone number to enter a weekly second-chance drawing. Scion drew 800,000 game plays, 92,000 profiles and 40,000 phone numbers.

THIRD PLACE: Smallville Text-2-Win

CLIENT: KSWB-TV

AGENCY: Vibes Media, Chicago

San Diego's KSWB-TV touted WB hit Smallville with a trivia contest. Ads before and during the show asked trivia questions; winners got coupons from KSWB advertiser Jack in the Box. Fully 2,000 viewers played, texting an average 15.4 times. Ratings hit 6.6 (7.7 for the finale), tops among WB stations nationally.



Best Use of Internet-based Trial Recruitment

Solstice Rises Again

CLIENT: *Solstice*

AGENCY: *Digitas, Boston, MA*

Surely you've seen it by now: Pontiac debuted its Solstice roadster on *The Apprentice* with an early-order promotion that sold 1,000 cars in 41 minutes and sold out its entire 2005 production in 10 days. The campaign won Pontiac and its agency, Digitas, a PRO Award in October and PMA's Super Reggie in March.

The tie-in worked because Pontiac collaborated with *Apprentice* producers on contestants' task: Create a brochure touting Solstice early order. "The brochure was a legitimate link that could bring viewers to dealerships the next day, with the brochure from the show there to close the loop right away," says Pontiac Marketing Director Mark-Hans Richer.

Pontiac gambled on *Apprentice*'s third season when its steep price tag turned off first-season partner Chrysler, amidst debate about brands' risk in the show's uncontrolled environment. (Remember Domino's cheeseburger-not-meatball pizza and Dove's cucumbers?) Three things mitigated Pontiac's risk, Richer says: "It was the right audience for us—young, professional, influential. We worked with the producers to have the right kind of task. And we believed in the car; it would speak for itself."



"Making the car a character of the show was really important, because that's how people would connect to it," says Victor Lee, VP-director of Digitas' promotions group.

A November taping gave Pontiac and Boston-based Digitas enough time to produce the brochure before the April airing. Only a media planner previewed the show (one day before airing, as a "disaster check," Richer says), so Pontiac's team had butterflies when they gathered in a local bar to watch. A laptop let them track Web site traffic as *Apprentice* progressed; traffic crept up, then "spiked obscenely when we dropped the early-order ad," Richer recalls. The next afternoon, when early orders began, "the servers melted out. It was a 10-day promotion that turned into a 41-minute promotion."

Pontiac followed up with a surprise Times Square concert on June 21 (summer solstice), and has since surpassed sales of rival Mazda Miata. Pontiac has sold 10,000 Solstices (about 10% of the roadster niche) and keeps a multi-month waiting list—evidence that Solstice is still rising. —*Betsy Spethmann*

SECOND PLACE: *AOL.com Launch*

CLIENT: *AOL*

AGENCY: *In-house*

AOL invited non-subscribers to make its site (now free) their home page with two sweeps. Win What You Want Now let two winners pick their prizes in key AOL categories ((travel, entertainment, music, movies, finance). Smaller daily instant-wins drove repeat traffic. Holiday-timed Wish Lists Come True awarded Visa gift cards (top prize: \$25,000) via AOL Shopping. Over two million sweeps entries; 32% of entrants made AOL.com their home page.

THIRD PLACE: *Quattro for Women Launch*

CLIENT: *Schick*

AGENCY: *Colangelo Synergy Marketing, Darien, CT*

Schick launched Quattro like a new car: Outdoor ads drove women to HoldOnLadies.com to “test drive” Quattro (400,000 samples, with “Owners Manual” coupon for blades). Quattro’s site topped one million visitors; 26% of samplers converted to Quattro; Schick’s market share hit No. 1 four weeks after launch.

Best Use of Internet-based Loyalty Marketing

Yahoo! Messenger—Emoti-Contest

CLIENT: *Yahoo*

AGENCY: *In-house*

Yahoo has become expert at putting its audience at the center of its marketing efforts (remember Julie’s 2004 search for the ideal mate via the company’s online personals?). When the in-house marketing team sat down last year to convert Yahoo loyalists to the company’s upgraded instant-messaging service, Messenger 7.0, it wanted those users to help sell the program’s personalization features.



“Anytime we give our users a chance to impact a program, it’s incredibly engaging,” says Sean Florio, Yahoo’s director of buzz marketing

The team created a worldwide consumer promotion that invited users to create the next new Yahoo! Messenger “Emoticon.” These animated smiley faces have become a variety of shorthand among IMers (those who instant message), adding an emotional overlay to the text of a message. Starting in April 2005, Yahoo IMers were asked to nominate a new Emoticon by sending a picture of themselves portraying its emotion. The top 20 were selected from over 84,000 suggestions (over 5,000 came with photos) for a vote-off.

“We saw several suggestions appear again and again, and it was great to be able to respond to that interest. The nominees all reflected the culture of instant messaging,” says Laura Campbell, marketing manager for Yahoo.

One month later, Campbell, marketing manager Britton Glasser and senior director of buzz marketing Bennett Porter invited the world to pick a winner. In fact, it chose six.

While the winning Emoticon was “on the phone,” so many votes came in for “timeout,” “call me,” “at wits end,” “waving,” and “daydreaming” that all six were added to the Yahoo lineup.

All totaled, the Emoti-Contest microsite received more than 4 million page views and more than 600,000 global Yahoo users cast their votes for their favorite Emoticon.

Now that is something to smile about!

—Kathleen M. Joyce

SECOND PLACE: *Winterize With Scotts*

CLIENT: *The Scott Co.*

AGENCY: *The Integer Group, Des Moines, IA*

Lawn care is highly seasonal, with most consumers engaging in the category during spring. Scotts needed a unique, direct-to-consumer online effort that drove fall fertilization awareness and won re-

tail support. Scotts leveraged its sponsorship of NASCAR driver Carl Edwards while he was a top contender for the NASCAR Nextel Cup in September and October—key months for fall fertilizer purchase. Web banners and outbound e-mail messages developed by The Integer Group gave the promotion visibility among online consumers, facilitating brand engagement and participation. Promotional e-mail messages, including a microsite link, were sent to existing Scotts E-mail Reminder Service (ERS) participants and to Edwards' online fan club newsletter recipients. At WINTERizewithScotts.com, consumers could enter the sweepstakes and sign up for Scotts ERS—plus play an instant-win game for a chance to win racing-themed prizes. Scotts saw double-digit sales growth at most key retailers and registered 20,000+ new profiles for its ERS. The program drove a 225% increase in visits to “my annual program” section of Scotts.com, along with 72,289 sweeps entries, 445,000 instant-wins and almost 5,000 referrals.

THIRD PLACE: Seroquel Patient Adherence Program

CLIENT: Astra-Zeneca

AGENCY: Cadient Group, West Conshohocken, PA

Seroquel is an antipsychotic used to treat schizophrenia and bipolar mania. Like all products in its class, refill rates among its users drop significantly during the first 60 to 90 days. But a program from Cadient Group has successfully driven adherence and loyalty via a coordinated program of online advertising, e-mail, Web site content, and interactive tools for patients, their family and friends that provided support and treatment motivation. At 31.2%, e-mail open rates among Seroquel users are higher than the industry average, and click-through rates average 13.6% (188.9% higher than average). More than 18% of registrants have downloaded an adherence-supporting tool.

Best Promotional Web Site (B2C)

Cadillac Under 5

CLIENT: Cadillac Under 5

AGENCY: Arc Worldwide, Chicago

When the folks over at Cadillac donned the logo “Break Through,” they must have had in mind a campaign that did just that to marketing clutter.

The Cadillac Under 5 promotion challenged film school students to cut a five-second ad to tout the Cadillac V-Series' ability to top 60 mph in five-seconds.



TV spots, posters, a shout-out at the Sundance Film Festival and a tie in to the film *Be Cool* sent entrants to Cadillacunderfive.com and Cadillac.com to submit their work. Aspiring producers had 12 days to cut the films.

“It was our big campaignable idea,” says Arc VP-creative director Steve Slivka. “We wanted to engage consumers to feel what the idea of under five seconds really means versus us telling them.”

Arc Worldwide leveraged Cadillac's ties to the MGM film, starring John Travolta as Chili Palmer, a Cadillac-loving gangster turned music manager. It brought in the film's cast to host CadillacUnder5.com, detail contest rules and judge the entries. Prior to the film's release, *Be Cool*'s director, F. Gary Gray, a Cadillac lover himself, plugged the contest at the Sundance Film Festival.

A “coming soon” Web site teased the promotion and featured information about the V-Series. A viral component put some five-second films created by Arc on the site as pass alongs.

The two Web sites garnered more than 2.5 million page views and 2,658 films were uploaded for judging.

The number of additional unique visitors to Cadillac.com soared by 358% over the previous year. Cadillac also received a 45% increase (43,000) additional requests for the location of Cadillac dealers and a 25% increase in sales for the V-Series in the four months following the promotion.

The winner received a 2005 Cadillac CTS-V and the film showcased in a Cadillac TV spot.

“Cadillac continues to reap rewards because of the level of execution,” Slivka says. “The results surpassed everyone’s expectation.”
—Andrew Scott

SECOND PLACE: *Quattro Power Launch*

CLIENT: *Schick*

AGENCY: *Colangelo Synergy Marketing, Darien, CT*

Schick introduced a four-blade razor two years ago followed by a four-blade battery-powered razor. To build brand awareness and excitement and to engage consumers to learn more about its product, a ThatsThePowerof4.com Web site was developed and served as the hub for Schick’s promotions. Ads on gaming, sports and music Web sites targeted the Gen-Y male consumer, Schick’s target market. An 18-page faux tabloid also featured stories of men experiencing the razor’s benefits to encourage viral activation and a visit to the Web site. In the first two months, 2 million users visited the Web Site, which garnered more than 7 million page views.

THIRD PLACE: *Pepsi Every 10 Minutes Xbox 360 Sweepstakes*

CLIENT: *Pepsi, Inc.*

AGENCY: *Yahoo, Inc., Sunnyvale, CA*

Consumers were directed to Every10minutes.com from specially marked packages of Pepsi and Mountain Dew products, which featured a 10-digit code under the bottle cap. Consumers entered codes and received a point, which could be spent in one of 9,222 sweepstakes drawings for an Xbox 360. The Web site drew a winner every 10 minutes and displayed the number of entries in each 10-minute slot, which allowed users to see the odds for each drawing. Two million users registered. More than 600,000 codes were entered on one day and 115,000 sports-related items were purchased with points from the Web site.

Best Promotional Web Site (B2B)

HUSA Square

CLIENT: *Heineken USA*

AGENCY: *Ryan Partnership, Wilton, CT*

Heineken USA’s sales network was not considered a very viable or valuable resource with print materials and CDs sent out piece meal via snail mail. That was until the company launched a new portal last summer, one centralized interactive location for all of its promotional and sales and marketing materials set to the theme of a nighttime urban setting called HUSA square.

The purpose was to offer a one-stop shop to disseminate marketing and promotional materials and other information internally to field sales reps as well as externally to distributor partners.



“We wanted them to want to go to this tool to find the relevant info,” says Richard Coppola, VP-creative director for Ryan Partnership, Wilton, CT.

From the home page (HUSA Square) users could find a wealth of information including the latest news on product launches, packaging and promotional events; a tool kit to download high-res art; an advertising section to view current campaigns; a section that details the entire year’s marketing and promotional activities; media activity detailed on a quarterly basis and links to all of Heineken USA’s consumer Web sites. A roof-top bar area—indicative of the real life trend of the popularity of roof-top bars—offers a place for sales reps and distributors to view products and marketing materials in their “natural environment”.

The result? Some 85% of HUSA employees used the portal. The employee sales force was so happy with the portal that the design is being rolled out nationally to the distributor network. —Patricia Odell

SECOND PLACE: *RadioShack SPIN2WIN: Spin Into Summer*

CLIENT: *RadioShack*

AGENCY: *Promotion Group Central, Chicago*

Give an employee a game to play at work and they’re likely to take the bait. That’s just what RadioShack did with help from Promotion Group Central to inspire its sales force to boost sales of wireless phones and accessories. The SPIN2WIN: Spin Into Summer sales incentive program ran last year from May 26 to June 30. At its heart was an interactive promotional Web site where players could spin the wheel to win prizes based on sales achievements. A sell sheet detailed what had to be sold to earn a specific number of spins. Each registered entrant also got the chance at one of five trips for two to a selected city of their choice. E-mail blast reminded sales reps to play. Some 94% of sales associates and managers participated with 41,575 prizes awarded. The program drove sales of 598,100 wireless phones and customer service calls decreased 15% during the program. RadioShack has run several similar programs since 2002.

THIRD PLACE: *Fox Cable Breakroom*

CLIENT: *The Fox Cable Networks*

AGENCY: *Daily Planet Marketing, Los Angeles,*

Foxcable.com, The Fox Cable Networks affiliate Web site, was looking for some action. The one-stop destination needed new and repeat affiliate users to take advantage of the content and activities on the site, including program descriptions schedules, promotions, logos, photos, sales data and marketing tools. The solution? A fun and engaging interactive experience called The Foxcable.com Break Room that launched online via a direct mail and e-mail campaign targeting affiliates. Activities at the site included a sweepstake, a ‘big-screen’ TV streaming FCN programming, a Daily Snack vending machine that gave away FCN premiums daily, a bulletin board with network updates and co-op marketing opportunities with links to affiliate materials, water cooler gossip and a sports section featuring Fox Sports updates. Traffic increased 70% during the four-month promotion and new registered users jumped 12%.

Best Use of Podcasting/Blog/RSS

Cooper Tires Ultimate Bowl Tour Blog

CLIENT: *Cooper Tires*

AGENCY: *ESPN ABC Sports Customer Marketing & Sales, New York City*

In 2004, Cooper Tire, the presenting sponsor of Thursday Night Football on ESPN, and the sports network wanted to develop a promotion that would resonate with college football fans and increase brand awareness for the tire maker.

ESPN scored a touchdown when it decided to tie to Cooper Tire’s Ultimate Bowl Tour sweepstakes to a Blog. The sweepstakes awarded one winner and three friends the chance to capture their experiences—pictures

and all—at five Bowl games. The Blog, Cooper Tire-branded, lived on ESPN's ultimate-bowltour.com site and was cross-promoted on Cooper's Web site. TV spots and print ads supported. Cooper Tire also teamed up with ESPN college football analyst Kirk Herbstreit, who served as the contest spokesperson and was part of the Ultimate Bowl Tour's national advertising campaign.



“We wanted to offer [Cooper Tire] a chance to engage fans 24/7,” says Fred Bucher, VP-co-marketing, ESPN ABC Sports customer marketing and sales. “We thought that a centerpiece to a strategy could cover all the action during [College] Bowl games.”

More than 11,000 unique visitors went to the site to follow the blog that the winner, Robert Simmons from Baton Rouge, LA, posted daily. Visitors spent an average three minutes and 17 seconds reading the postings.

The Blog achieved what Cooper Tires and ESPN outlined in its strategy: to reinforce brand awareness and create excitement for the tire brand among college football fans. The Blog also gave Cooper Tires brand exposure beyond the sweeps by finding an interactive way to showcase the fan experience.

The promotion, which recently wrapped up its second year, “exceeded our expectation and is a great model to generate buzz,” Bucher says.

—Andrew Scott

SECOND PLACE: *Richard Bangs Adventure-America's Most Adventurous Family*

CLIENT: *Yahoo*

AGENCY: *In-house*

America's Most Adventurous Family promotion allowed Yahoo to lure visitors to its Richard Bangs Adventures site offering the chance to become a part of the storyline. Families were encouraged to enter an essay competition detailing why they should win the moniker “America's Most Adventurous Family.” Yahoo selected, interviewed and captured video of five finalists explaining why they should win the grand prize. The videos, which were featured on the site, garnered 2,000 votes and were viewed 14,000 times. The winning family traveled with the Richard Bangs Adventures team and retraced the trail of Captain Morgan's search for treasure in Panama. The adventure was featured for a week on the site. The promotion site received more than 46,000 visitors.

THIRD PLACE: *Purina Podcasting & Mobile Marketing Campaign*

CLIENT: *Nestlé Purina*

AGENCY: *Arc Worldwide, Chicago*

Nestlé Purina PetCare Co. found a niche when it tested the podcasting space offering audio podcasts of its Animal Advice radio program to communicate with pet owners. Handled by Arc Worldwide, Chicago, consumers downloaded free segments of Purina's existing radio program on a variety of topics—pet care tips, animal training and behavioral theories—on iTunes and Purina.com. Purina promoted the podcasts online and via p.r. While the company didn't provide results, Purina boosted consumer subscriptions and found pet lovers panting for more content.

Best Use of Search Engine Marketing

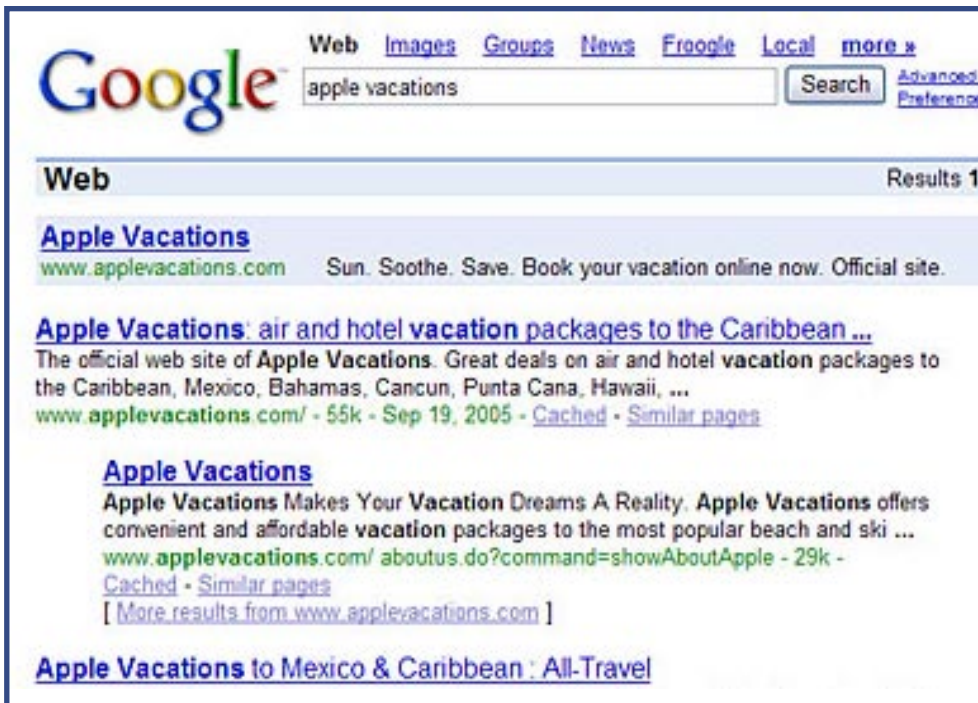
Apple Vacations Search Campaign

CLIENT: *Apple Vacations*

AGENCY: *Refinery, Hatboro, PA*

When it comes to searching for a leisurely vacation or trip online, Apple Vacations made sure its company is at the top of the list.

Shifting its marketing messaging to better reflect consumers' needs, Apple Vacations plunged into the world of search engine marketing—it's first-ever attempt—under a new campaign last year.



Popular among travelers for its vacations packages to Mexico, Hawaii and Europe, among others, Apple Vacations sought to maximize online bookings on its newly designed Web site. Since its inception in 1969, the company largely hung its hat on traditional advertising (print ads and radio and TV spots).

“The idea was to bring Apple Vacation to the next level in online marketing,” says Larry Touhill, Apple Vacation’s e-commerce manager. “We wanted to make sure Apple was at the forefront of people’s searches.”

Enter Refinery, a Hatboro, PA-based interactive agency. Refinery led the charge to bring Apple Vacations into the 21st Century with its search engine marketing initiative.

To lure users to AppleVacations.com, Refinery designed word search categories specific to consumers’ needs (think destinations and hotel names). And to help maximize its effort, Refinery targeted its messaging to specific departure cities in Apple Vacation’s nearly 40-market area, such as “Deals from Chicago”. During its test, the agency also eliminated underperforming key works and placements.

“We saw a great opportunity for [Apple Vacations] based on brand recognition,” says Erik Harbison, Refinery’s director of search engine marketing. “It is all about the need to capture those eyeballs. What is important in this case is a trusted brand...making sure when people are doing these searches they keep Apple top of mind.”

“When people type “Cancun”, we want the term to almost be synonymous with Apple Vacations,” Touhill adds.

And for Apple Vacations, the effort paid off. Over the course of the seven-week program, paid search placements program exceeded Apple Vacation’s ROI metric by more than 400%. The paid search program regularly performs about 200% above the company’s break-even, ROI. The company has tapped Refinery to manage of its search engine marketing programs on an ongoing basis.

—Amy Johannes

SECOND PLACE: *The Best of Yahoo*

CLIENT: *Yahoo*

AGENCY: *In-house*

Yahoo took second-place in the category with its in-house campaign, The Best of Yahoo, which dangled sweepstakes prizes (seven 2006 Mazda vehicles) to incent consumers to participate in its “Best Of” cities program. Using Yahoo Local and Yahoo Travel, visitors in more than 25 cities rated and reviewed categories from restaurants and bars to plumbers and dry cleaners. The result? Yahoo drove 2.25 million pages views and more than 145,000 votes casts via 60,000 registrants.

THIRD PLACE: *Georgia Aquarium Opening*

CLIENT: *Atlanta Convention & Visitors Bureau*

AGENCY: *USDM.net, Corpus Christi, TX*

USDM.net rounded out the top three for Best Use of Search Engine Marketing with its Atlanta, GA—Georgia Aquarium Opening for the Atlanta Convention & Visitors Bureau. USDM.net used e-mail, search and banner ads as part of a regional campaign to promote Atlanta as a family vacation destination based on a \$10,000 budget. As a result, the campaign generated nearly 3,000 registrations, 1,188 opt-ins to the enewsletter database and more than 1,400 travel guide requests.

Best Use on E-Mail Marketing

The 12 Deals of Christmas

CLIENT: *Toys ‘R’ Us*

AGENCY: *In-house*

Sure, birthdays happen throughout the year and doting grandparents create excuses for indulging their grandchildren at any time. But December is a time zone unto itself for Toys ‘R’ Us.

Pressured by Wal-Mart, Costco and other big-box retailers offline, as well as online toy purveyors like Amazon, TRU needed to build traffic for its bricks-and-mortar venues during Christmas 2005 while creating a low-price buzz that answered the competition.

The in-house marketing team, led by marketing manager Torquil Perry and creative managers Shi Chen and Tom Au, came up with an e-mail data collection and fulfillment strategy that was low-cost and quick to turn around.

In phase one, banner ads on targeted sites encouraged sign-ups and linked to a registration page (Toysrusemail.com). An e-mail flagging the registration site was sent to 2 million members of online coupon portal Cool Savings. And bag stuffers touting the program were distributed at TRU stores during the week of Nov. 13.

As a result, nearly 230,000 new names were added to the TRU database. These and other TRU loyalists were sent a “heads up” e-mail to build anticipation for a TRU e-mail per day for 12 days in a row (to reduce “unsubscribes” who might otherwise be wary of such e-mail volume).

Then, from Dec.1 through Dec. 12, the offers began to flow—each good for that day only in any TRU store. The daily emails linked to a host page where recipients could select just the coupons they wanted.



“We wanted to generate excitement and urgency as well as get immediate action for those who wanted to take advantage of the offers,” Perry explains.

E-Centives hosted the coupon program and managed security, preventing generalized online posting or use outside the target market. Each recipient was only allowed to print coupons once per day, and his or her name was printed on each coupon.

Even so, with a 21% redemption rate against downloads, response was way beyond what TRU marketers had anticipated. Inventory levels for some items thinned so quickly that a few coupon offers were modified at the last-minute.

With success like this, Geoffrey the Giraffe might make Rudolph wonder about his job security!

—Kathleen M. Joyce

SECOND PLACE: Chandon's Sparkling Circle

CLIENT: *Moët-Hennessy USA*

AGENCIES: *141 XM, New York City; MediaPal, Hollywood, FL*

Moët sent an e-mail to current members and prospects offering one of three “sparkling music mixes” for holiday entertaining. It wasn't offering a compilation CD: the e-mail had a link to Chandon's own site, for members to download their choice of eight song collections. The brand gave away nearly 5,000 downloads—about 3,500 to current members, and 1,500 to prospects. A PIN code on each e-mail let Moët track which members responded, and what compilations they chose.

THIRD PLACE: MSN Search Spoof

CLIENT: *Microsoft*

AGENCY: *In-house*

Call it the ultimate April Fool's joke, or a seriously cool tool that lets visitors create fake search results to trick their friends and family into search results that may startle and amuse. To spoof a subject, visitors simply entered the “target's” name, then picked a “stereotype” about the person. This generated results that made it seem like people were saying the oddest things about them.

Best Campaign Conducted Outside the U.S.

Pepsi/Doritos “Be First to Play”

CLIENT: *Pepsi/Doritos*

AGENCY: *IC Group, Oakbrook Terrace, IL*

The Xbox 360: one of the most sought after gifts of this past holiday season. What better prize to dangle prior to retail availability in a consumer promotion that garnered IC Group the top award for its work with Pepsi and Doritos.

The promotion paired Pepsi-Cola Canada and Frito Lay Canada for an online contest called Be First to Play. It offered the chance to win one Xbox 360 every hour during the contest period, which ran from Oct. 2, 2005 through Nov. 10, 2005. Each prize package included the gaming system, an Xbox game 3 and a “Party in a Box,” which included a variety of Xbox products and coupons for Pepsi and Doritos products. The total value of the prize pool was close to \$300,000 (Canadian).



“For us, it’s all about trying to drive volume by driving that repeat purchase,” says Katherine Tmeg, marketing manager, for Pepsi-QTG Canada.

To play, consumers purchased specially marked Pepsi and Doritos products and registered a unique PIN number at the promotion site to enter the sweepstakes for that hour’s draw. The chance to win once per hour drew plenty of activity, with more than 1.6 million unique visits and more than 2.9 million sweeps entries. The average number of entries per hour was more than 3,000, with an average visit time of 11.2 minutes.

Two major goals of the promotion were to drive increased display distribution of the program, as well as gain a larger space on the retail floor to increase sales (a number Pepsi holds close to the vest), says Kelly Crerar, senior VP-strategy, IC Group, Chicago and Winnipeg, Canada.

“Just by showing [retailers] what was expected in sales numbers gave the retailer the comfort that if they had more product in stock they would sell it,” Crerar says.

The promotion was available in every channel where the Pepsi and Doritos products were sold, from major retailers to local gas stations. In some account specific programs the displays took up entire walls with 12-packs stacked from floor to ceiling. To add a creative twist, built within the stacked cases consumers could read the word “Xbox.”

“This promotion really gave us something to go to our customers with and leverage that to get the huge displays and the sort of size displays we’re accustomed to having, say, during Super Bowl,” Tmeg says. “It really generated a lot of buzz and excitement at the retail level and with consumers.

Print, broadcast, Internet and in-store materials supported.

—Patricia Odell

SECOND PLACE: *Rock Yr Senses*

CLIENT: *Procter & Gamble’s Herbal Essences*

AGENCY: *Upshot, Chicago*

Looking to shore up declining market share in Canada and makeover its coolness factor, Procter & Gamble’s Herbal Essences targeted teens right where it counts; offering them the chance to become celebrities. The Rock Your Senses contest let entrants submit photos and a story about their personal style online at a dedicated microsite. Viral e-cards boosted visibility by 25%. Some 9,872 peers voted for their favs with three winners and their friends winning exclusive VIP treatment at the 2005 Much Music Video Awards (Canadian version of MTV) and a makeover. The winner got to be a correspondent at the MMTV awards and hosted their own MuchMusic commercial. The winner was also showcased online and through 30-second spots on Much Music. Sales grew \$4.63 million during the promotional period.

THIRD PLACE: *Yahoo PhotoMail*

CLIENT: *Yahoo*

AGENCY: *In-house*

A one-day global sharing event, PhotoMail A Day in the Life Event, delivered 8,000 new downloads across seven countries for Yahoo’s new PhotoMail product. Last summer, Yahoo used the largest ad unit on its home page in the seven countries to display photos from around the world as they were submitted by Yahoo users using PhotoMail. Users could look through the photos and submit their own. The posting included the first name of the person submitting the photo and their country flag. The event was held over a 33-hour period with a team of 600 yahoo employee screening photos. Some 2 million visitors clicked to browse the images or submit a photo.