



Stop Shouting and Talk to Me. The Rise of Meaningful Content

If someone walked up to you in a pub and shouted at you for 30 seconds about themselves, would you listen? You might certainly hear the words, but would you be engaged? Probably not. This, however, is pretty much what traditional advertising has done for years – the interruption method. There is no doubt that this approach gets the message across, but now that audiences have increasingly sophisticated ways to avoid commercial messaging, brands are having to work increasingly hard to meaningfully engage with them. We believe that engagement is best done through content.

Content is not a hard sell; if she were to walk into a pub she would buy you a pint and ask how you were. Content invites a conversation, rather than shouting. In so doing, it can greatly enhance a brand's messaging.

It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that adverts are increasingly becoming more about entertainment with a little hard sell attached rather than the reverse. Shouting is no longer enough. As audiences have become better at filtering out commercial messages, brands have turned to more mainstream entertainment to support their marketing activities and communicate with their customers. This is why we believe content should now be at the heart of every brand's marketing mix, and we believe that its role will only grow.

To add to this, TV and digital are evolving at a quicker pace than ever before. The web, with its ever increasing share of the advertising market has driven up demand for sticky content, while on television, largely as a reaction to spend migrating online, broadcasters have for the first time been allowed to sell product placement.

MPG Media Contacts, through the launch of Branded, our specialist content team, has been at the forefront of both.

We believe content should form a part of most brands' activities today. From their website, through to any commercials for broadcast. And content should be versatile. A common failing in the current market is that brands make one piece of content without thinking of how it could be deployed elsewhere for maximum effect. There is also a misconception about how much good content costs – it is genuinely possible to produce broadcast quality work for £50-100k.

If you have in-house ability to produce the content, as we at Branded do, brands can make further savings without compromising quality.

So what does the current landscape look like? Everything is rapidly converging and has both direct and indirect benefits. We are increasingly delivering work in the social and online environment which is performing better than some of the more traditional executions employed by the same brands in former years.

We are also seeing a shift in brands engaging with making their own TV shows, as well as using more basic forms of content as a great cost effective way of boosting search.

Finally, with product placement now legal in the UK, brands can engage with seeing their product in shows that perfectly fit their brand; this, in turn, gives them the opportunity to license characters or content from those shows. Added to this, brands can commission bespoke content that runs alongside the show in online and social environments. A genuine 360° opportunity that we believe hugely deepens the communication.

The opportunities in the branded content space are dazzling and it's easy for marketers to feel overwhelmed by the pace at which things are moving. Keeping up with technology, emerging channels, consumer adoption, and viewing trends can be a full time job on its own. What content should a brand create? How should it be distributed and, in these times, how can it be created cost effectively? Expensive shoots and big production teams are getting harder to justify. At Branded, we understand the complexities involved in delivering great content to budgets that are both realistic and advantageous to our clients. Essentially, we are a bespoke creative, production and distribution service, integrated within the agency and available to all MPG Media Contacts clients.

It's true to say that, more than ever, content is king.