

Win a F1 sponsorship for your business

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA: As a global sponsor of the McLaren Mercedes F1 Team, Vodafone enjoys exposure to millions of passionate racing fans worldwide. However, as the Australian F1 prepared to take place in Melbourne in 2010, Vodafone wanted to localise the event to connect with Australians.



Sport could be described as the heartbeat of Australian culture, and the telecommunications category is cluttered with a myriad of sport sponsorships. Vodafone was looking to overturn the conventional sport sponsorship into something tangible and exciting to generate 'talkability' and help build customer loyalty along the way.

Branded race cars act as immediate sign posts for fans, so Vodafone chose to release branding space its own cars, and create a valuable asset that could be leveraged to the brand's advantage. In effect, Vodafone decided to give away the 'money can't buy' brand space on the cars to one lucky Vodafone Australia business customer.

Success-driven natural leaders

Research confirmed that the small business audience is extremely time-sensitive and financially conscious, but this group also includes the highest achievers in the population. They are success-driven natural leaders who are always open to new and cost-effective ways to grow their business.

With both retention and acquisition being equally important objective, the campaign required a phased approach that allowed Vodafone to maximise the small media budget of A\$130 000 and ensure targeted reach.

The communication strategy was carried out in three phases. The first phase involved using direct, personalised communication to the existing business customer base to galvanise excitement and encourage entry.

After entries were gathered, Vodafone spread the word about competition winner Gary Turner, and highlighted the significance of the prize to his small outdoor event business Maximum Adventures. This was achieved through leading business print media to drive positive buzz within the business community.

The heart of the campaign and its success rested in how the brand could amplify momentum and convert interest into new business leads. Exclusive F1 online content videos were produced to entertain and create interest and desire for the benefits Vodafone could provide its business customers. This resulted in four 90-second videos, detailing Gary's journey.

Treated like a VIP

The winner was announced at a press event with Louis Hamilton. The video introduced Gary and told the story of how the F1 sponsorship would change his business. Gary was treated to a VIP Grand Prix experience, which included the unveiling of the cars and the race itself.

Using the online video network Joost, content was customised on banners allowing users to interact with all the videos seamlessly within targeted sport and business environments.

Results

According to Joost, Vodafone's F1 was its most successful customer banner to date. The videos had 2.8M complete views across four weeks. The brand reached double of the total small business audience of 1.4M.

66% of users chose to play the videos at full-length (with sound-enabled and video aggregation), compared to the typical 25% campaign benchmark.

New Vodafone business connections during the key campaign months of March and May were the highest for 2010 with each month achieving 10% share of total connections respectively compared to the 8% monthly average.

This campaign was shortlisted at the 2011 Festival of Media Awards, in the 'Media Bravery' and 'Best Use of Content' categories.

Why is this on Cream? High profile sports sponsorships are big business, so it was a brave decision for Vodafone to share part of its premium space with a small local business.

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