

Introducing Vodafone Red

LONDON, UK / BERLIN, GERMANY / LISBON, PORTUGAL / MADRID, SPAIN: Vodafone celebrates a new era in telecoms by literally turning everything red.



Insight

Everybody hates Telcos. They rip you off, let you down, bombard you with endless, pointless offers, and give you nothing but contempt for staying loyal. Moreover, there's nothing you can do about it because they're all the same.

Red was the biggest news in telecoms for years, and long overdue. When other networks, such as EE in the UK, spent multimillions promoting a flawed 4G proposition that appealed to less than 5% of the population, Vodafone decided it had to offer something different, something that genuinely benefited hard-pressed consumers.

With this inspiration, Vodafone created its biggest global campaign in five years, a campaign to differentiate itself from what was offered by its competitors, provide a compelling reason for non-customers to consider switching to Vodafone, and make existing customers upgrade to Red. This was based on the supply of a package that was designed to always give clients the bill they expect, the handset they want, the best data experience, and the most reliable network ever.

Strategy

Vodafone's strategy can be summed up in three phases.

The first was changing the game. Red was against complacency and accepting the status quo. Communications needed to embrace this spirit. Vodafone's first objective was to create a real sense of event; a recognition that something genuinely new and ground-breaking was happening in the category. The key ingredients that were needed to achieve this were: big, bold and engaging broadcast communications, premium environments and formats and driving talk-ability with media firsts, co-ordinated with PR and in-store activity.

The second one was tailoring the benefits. Announcing the arrival of Red and heralding a new era in telecoms was not enough. In order to make consumers care, the benefits had to be brought to life to the key target audience. In order to

achieve this, a bespoke global segmentation study based on technology behaviours, attitudes, usage and business value was used to prioritise consumers who would find Red most appealing. The most influential messages, occasions and environments were identified for the occasions. Each message was bespoke to each core segment. It was to be the end of the "one size fits all" messaging.

The final phase was sealing the deal. Dominating the final stages of the purchase path and winning at the point of sale wasn't optional. Vodafone needed to target the in-market audience actively, with compelling reasons to make potential clients choose Red.

The paid communication was merely the fuel for owned assets. Integration of Vodafone's website and retail stores was a fundamental part of the journey, and was to ensure no dead ends.

Execution

Vodafone identified the behaviours of confident, audacious launch brands and pushed both creative agency and client to stop thinking like a Telco. It delivered media first after first, turning the actual front pages of the national press in Portugal red (which even made breakfast television news), breaking the rules of conventional TV by creating an exclusive ad block of three advertisers, extending the Red message throughout each spot; and becoming the first ever sponsor of a European metro line (the red one of course) in Madrid.

It managed to seed a 90" film on YouTube, dramatising a lifetime kiss, which drove more than 300K views worldwide in its first week and extensive PR coverage; unprecedented in the category. The world was taking note; this was not an average Telco launch.

Vodafone's 'high end achievers' segment was targeted with data messaging whilst commuting; this was when their usage was at its highest.

'Connected Mainstream' wanted the benefits of technology without the hassle, so Vodafone decided to dramatise the product story through innovative Shazam tagging of the TV ad, interactive digital takeovers and promoted Facebook posts.

Additionally, to bring it all together, Vodafone used intelligent real time optimisation to fine tune campaign delivery based on performance by ad type, site and location.

Results

In the Telco sector, it is possible to see the impact and success of a campaign in real time. Telco's are the ultra FMCGs. Vodafone had to track measures in place that identified the success of consumer sentiment, brand performance and product take up in real time, allowing Vodafone to redefine time, place and message.

Cut through and differentiation benchmarks were established at the planning stage at 10% higher than campaign averages. Vodafone managed to improve on both measures by more than 22% vs. previous campaigns.

The campaign was also hugely successful in driving engagement with CTRs five times above the industry average, and video view rates four times higher than the category average.

All this drove tangible business value for Vodafone, with over two thirds of all gross additions coming from Red and smashing the original target of 30%. Upgrades also doubled compared to targets, a remarkable achievement in the economically challenged Eurozone.

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