

MSN case study:

Online puts magic in Harry Potter launch

Video does the trick, but only in the right online environment

BRIEF:	Maximise buzz and interest in Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince movie release
CLIENT:	Roadshow
TARGET AUDIENCE:	16-39 year-olds
PLATFORMS:	MSN.co.nz, Windows Live Messenger and Hotmail
AGENCY:	OMD

Campaign overview

Harry Potter is a big deal. People listen when those words are spoken. Nevertheless, movie distributors face stiff competition for attention, and capturing the biggest possible slice of box office takings requires heavy-duty marketing support – even when it comes to movie phenomena, like Harry.

One of numerous movie promotions managed by OMD, a larger chunk of promotional budget went online, where younger audiences increasingly dwell, to leverage online media properties and channels that support exchange and amplify buzz.

The usual phalanx of ‘above the line’ vehicles spearheaded mass-market promotion, which was paralleled by a three-week ‘through the line’ digital campaign, using movie trailers and a mini site. Digital worked wonders. People like dynamic content and dwell on it longer. MSN.co.nz and its related social networking tools Windows Live Messenger and Hotmail draw the right kind of crowds, who, more than their counterparts found on hard news sites, are receptive to entertainment cues and entreaties.

MSN solution

Run-of-site medium rectangle video; Windows Live Messenger text-link with expanding half-banner video, and Today Page small rectangle video; Hotmail medium rectangle video.

Execution

Movie trailers, by nature, are enticing. Placement within lifestyle sites and social networking facilitates sharing and chat. But the challenge, until recently, has been serving up rich content so that it consistently performs in a real-time non-bandwidth taxing fashion. A three-week online campaign, the movie trailer proved irresistible. A supporting blog in MSN Entertainment FIX pointed readers to a ‘MuggleHub’ mini-site, where they accessed downloads, skins, buttons, social networking tools and banners, generating additional buzz.

Results

The campaign delivered 3.4 million impressions, which captured 11,847 clicks (0.35% CTR) and 1.8 million interactions. Both standard and rich media creative performed creditably. The Messenger conversation text-link captured 1,583 clicks – a third of total clicks captured by standard creative. The MSN Windows Live Today tile also did well, capturing 1,434 clicks (0.18% CTR). Both results sit well above industry standard CTR performance. In terms of rich media, the MSN Messenger expanding video half banner performed really well, recording 7,044 clicks (1.11% CTR) – around 35% of overall clicks.

Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince broke numerous New Zealand opening weekend records, grossing \$2.4 million with sold-out sessions across the country. The movie holds the mantle for the second highest opening weekend result of all time, only trumped by the epic final installment of the Lord of The Rings trilogy.

Lessons

A younger audience, like MSN’s, is tuned to entertainment messages. They’re happy watching. They’re also practiced at talking to each other and jump into social networking tools. Obviously, movie trailers elicit more excitement than, say, comparing bank lending rates, and show greater stickiness. Video delivery is another factor with studies showing 30% longer dwell rates than standard creative.

