

MSN case study:

Digital drums up big crowd for Lynx

Product launch uses perfect mix of performance and premium advertising.

BRIEF:	Maximize brand interaction and online traffic to Lynx campaign website
CLIENT:	Unilever
TARGET AUDIENCE:	Males 15-24
PLATFORMS:	MSDR performance network and premium placement on MSN.co.nz and Windows Live Messenger
AGENCY:	PHDiQ

Campaign overview

Brand owners like control. When it comes to online, fixing the amount paid for clicks is one way to get it. Little wonder performance-based CPC (cost-per-click) advertising keeps growing. However, studies show that performance advertising works better when it runs in conjunction with premium display, simply because you can't always expect people to act (click) when they don't know you; when the spadework hasn't been done.

Guided by strict e-CPM objectives, but also conscious of contextual factors maximising brand engagement, PHDiQ got the mix right, combining premium placements on msn.co.nz with MSDR performance buys across MSN's local network.

Plenty of heads turned and nodded at Lynx Limited Edition Music Star's promise (get back all the girls the rock stars stole). And a decent volume of blokes went all the way, visiting the campaign website.

MSN solution

An expandable 300x250 video rectangle on msn.co.nz lifestyle site NZ Men; Windows Live Messenger video Half-Page banner; Standard banners across MSN network.

Execution

The Lynx Effect promised users more magnetism than rock stars. Video cleverly illuminated the fleshy possibilities of using the right fragrance. Viewers suitably impressed clicked through to a campaign website, where they could spy their very own gyrating groupie by activating their webcam and pointing it at the code on the side of special edition Lynx Limited Edition Music Star cans.

Premium Video placements in lifestyle category NZ Men and Windows Live Messenger counterbalanced MSDR performance buys, delivering contextual relevance to the campaign.

Results

MSDR performance advertising (approximately one-fifth of the campaign budget spent with MSN) funnelled a decent stream of traffic to the campaign website, capturing 1,885 click-throughs; and 2.56 million impressions served in the process made a solid impact across MSN's network. Windows Live Messenger and lifestyle category NZ Men (premium environments) connected with a more concentrated audience, but proportionally delivered much more traffic. Specifically, Windows Live Messenger delivered 869,000 impressions and 7,674 clicks (0.88% CTR); and NZ Men delivered 538,000 impressions, accounting for 825 clicks (0.15% CTR). The combined delivery satisfied strict e-CPMs and delivered a price-tagged volume of clicks, network reach, and strong performing CPM placements in premium-targeted environments.

Lessons

Video is especially important when you need to tell a big story, and more so as advertisers look to do that job within the ad space (and not just on the campaign website). In any case, a younger audience, like MSN's, is tuned into video.

Brand advertisers like Unilever are investing significant sums online. For the Lynx brand Unilever places digital as their No. 2 'must have' media. They wouldn't do that if online didn't perform.

The beauty of MSDR is that it offers marketers certainty – a set number of price tagged clicks and voluminous impressions. It also nicely counterbalances higher-priced clicks in premium targeted environments.

Brand engagement isn't just about clicks. For example, video dwell rates might indicate a depth of brand connection.

These dimensions, and others, can influence interest and downstream decision-making, which is why impressions, and not just clicks, must be part of reporting campaign performance.

