

MSN case study:

Great characters need the right platform

Online isn't the place to spread yourself thinly

BRIEF:	Generate mass awareness of Shrek: The Final Chapter
CLIENT:	Paramount Pictures
TARGET AUDIENCE:	Broad – parents and kids
PLATFORMS:	MSN.co.nz
AGENCY:	MEC

Campaign overview

Everybody loves Shrek, and Shrek: The Final Chapter – the fourth and final instalment in the Shrek film series – looked promising. The New Zealand opening followed considerable success in the United States and Canada, where the movie held the number one box office position for three consecutive weeks. It's no secret that online is a crucial promotional platform, providing necessary reach and 'richness' for movie trailers, and building fan excitement. Perhaps lesser known, but no less critical, is online promotional placement. With so many people looking in so many places, the temptation is to thinly spread your promotion to secure territorial breadth, and be everywhere your customers are. But when you've got a character as engaging as Shrek, a better approach is animating the right platform – making a bigger bang, if you like. MSN did the job, providing necessary reach, but, mostly, giving Shrek the right kind of stage that got people watching.

MSN solution

MSN.co.nz and inventory including Homepage OTP, Homepage side panels; MSN Entertainment expandable video and editorial links; 300x250 run-of-site in householder shopper environments.

Execution

With the timeframe concentrated to movie release week, the campaign front-end used a MSN Homepage OTP, which served up a 15-second video, to deliver a decent bang. Side panels added static visual effect. In support, 300x250 placements in lifestyle categories delivered two-week campaign longevity and the doorway through which fans accessed the movie trailer. An MEC planner said: "The online recommendation for Shrek wasn't rocket science. It mostly concerned choosing the right sites where we could get a combination of audience mass, a good price, and grab attention."

Results

While volume is nice, what really counts is CTR, and on this measure MSN delivered, providing an overall 0.8% CTR – one of the better results of the year. Credit must also go to the big green guy, who it must be said is more clickable than many other characters. The Homepage OTP in the first week delivered 11,650 interactions, which over the second week dropped slightly to 9,122 interactions.

Lessons

As in life, lovable characters will pull a crowd online.

When it comes to video delivery, nothing competes with online price competitiveness.

Online attention spans are short. People flit around and cover an awful lot of ground, making the job ever tougher for advertisers. Resist the tendency to spread promotional activity thinly. Partner a big hitter and make a decent splash. In any case, repurposing creative for multiple online publishers is expensive and unnecessarily diverts budget from the principal task.

A younger audience, like MSN's, is tuned to entertainment messages. They're happy watching.

