

Millward Brown Unveils New Pre-Test Metric That Predicts Viral Potential

Contributed by Millward Brown
 Tuesday, 30 March 2010
 Last Updated Tuesday, 30 March 2010

Research Identifies the ABCD of Successful Virals

Marketers around the world are looking to achieve expanded reach through creating ads that "go viral." Yet, new research released today by Millward Brown found that less than one in six video ads achieve high viral viewing volumes.*

Predicting viral success prior to launching an ad has now become easier with the development of a new Creative Viral Potential (CVP) metric. CVP is the first pre-testing metric to help marketers predict the likely viral viewing of video advertising.

It is available immediately to customers of Millward Brown's LINK™ pre-test research tool.

CVP was developed through new research that analyzed behavioral viewings data from YouTube for 102 video commercials alongside survey-based pre-test measures.

It uncovered four essential components to viral success: the Awareness Index (a measure of branded engagement that has long been used by advertisers to predict the success of their TV advertising) as well as Buzz (which identifies whether an ad is likely to generate pass-along); Celebrity (the profile of a celebrity when used in an ad), and Distinctiveness (a measure of originality).

Duncan Southgate, global innovation director at Millward Brown, will showcase the research for the first time today at WARC's Measuring Advertising Performance conference in London.

Commenting on the findings he said:

"As an advertiser, your chances of a major viral success are relatively low, but it's a prize worth aiming for and our new validated pre-test metric makes it an easier target to hit."

"There are many media factors which can drive viral viewing. Level of TV advertising support plays a major role, which is evidenced by the online success of many commercials shown during this year's Super Bowl. Viewings can also be influenced significantly by viral seeding or PR activities that place the ad appropriately with opinion formers and then fan the flames to ensure wider awareness,"

Southgate continued.

"However, this research clearly shows that creative factors (awareness-building engagement, buzz, celebrity and distinctiveness) play a huge role in determining viral success."

To demonstrate the power of this new predictive framework, Millward Brown conducted additional analysis of eight recently successful US viral videos. The analysis confirms that a high Awareness Index is important to viral success.

It also highlights that the other measures of success: Buzz, Celebrity and Distinctiveness can generate viewings for some ads with more moderate Awareness Index scores.

"Three of these ads had only average engagement scores among the general population, but have achieved viral success by appealing very strongly to a specific target audience," said Southgate. "Audi is targeting green consumers, Carl's Jr is appealing strongly to men, and Google Nexus One is targeting a youth audience. However, others including the Old Spice, E-Trade, Snickers and Coke commercials have managed the rare trick of being engaging and distinctive, yet still appealing to a broad audience."

The main drivers behind the success stories of the eight ads are detailed below:

10th March 2010