

Engage through augmented reality

Honda employed an interactive iPhone app to encourage consumer engagement for the launch of a new Jazz model

By Martin Moll, *Honda (UK)*

Honda has a tradition of producing memorable campaigns with its advertising agency, Wieden+Kennedy. In 2010, Honda launched an ad campaign for its new Jazz marque that was designed to work with an Apple app, in order to increase engagement and push consumers to interact with the commercial beyond simply watching it on TV when it was served to them.

THE MARKET

In 2010, the UK car market was in a difficult place. Declining car sales, exacerbated by the end of the scrappage scheme, hit motor manufacturers - Honda included - hard. Honda was due to launch a new version of the Jazz, one of the UK's most popular small family cars. Built in Honda's Swindon plant, more than 220,000 models have been sold in the UK.

The Jazz is priced from £1 1,295 and one of its biggest strengths is adaptability, with 'magic seats' which can be moved to accommodate anything the driver might need.

Honda ads tend not to be as formulaic as others in the car sector. Instead, they are often creatively driven, which gave the marketing team the freedom to try a new strategy.

THE CHALLENGE/OBJECTIVE

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For Honda's marketing team, the challenge was to get more views of its commercial despite a constrained media budget, due to a need for cost efficiencies across the business. Throwing money at advertising space wasn't an option, so the marketing team had to find a way to increase the target market's exposure to the new television commercial without increasing ad spend, and in a unique and innovative way.

So, together with Wieden+Kennedy, Honda researched ways of persuading consumers to re-watch ads that they had already seen on TV. Once someone has watched your ad for the first time, how can you persuade them to get up, seek it out and watch it again? As an advertiser, you pay for each time an ad is served to your audience. The challenge Honda faced was to create a reason for those who'd already watched the ad to search for it online and watch it without the car maker having to pay for it to be shown.

So, engagement was key - Honda and Wieden+Kennedy would have to create a TV commercial that would not only sell cars, but would also draw viewers in and offer them a persuasive reason to watch the commercial again.

Additionally, the perfect solution would draw in younger viewers, as traditional Jazz buyers tend to be 50 years old and over.

THE IDEA

Researching ways to engage consumers, Honda and Wieden+Kennedy hit upon the idea of a game which would run in tandem with the ad. A game that rewarded players for successfully interacting with the ad, it would motivate people to re-watch the ad in much the same way that a compelling game rewards successful players with in-game incentives such as virtual money, or new characters might motivate players to keep coming back to it. And, although nothing like the planned campaign had ever been attempted before, the technology to create a game which would interact with a TV ad was available.

Wieden+Kennedy created an ad which was designed to work with an accompanying iPhone app. The ad itself featured a surreal animated montage of various stages of a person's life, showing interactions from various characters.

The Pixar-style ad follows a character as he dreamily floats through life, collecting experiences and possessions, and culminates in a Honda Jazz appearing to mould its way around the characters, demonstrating the car's ability to handle all that life has to throw at the modern family.

Rather than allowing interaction to stop at the end of the ad, Wieden+Kennedy created an iPhone app which was designed specifically to work with the campaign, and allowed viewers to 'catch' characters by swiping the



Honda Jazz: the ad follows the life of the main protagonist as he interacts with other characters. The app allowed users to 'catch' the characters with their iPhone

ad with their phone at the appropriate point.

The app worked as a call to action: the ad encouraged viewers to go to the Apple Store and download the app. Once downloaded, the app allowed users to 'collect' characters featured in the ad. The app and ad were designed to make it challenging to capture all of the characters in one go, in order to push people online where they could view the ad in full. Honda's strategy was to create engagement, rather than just communication, and demonstrate a warm, playful nature, with the ultimate aim of entering into a two-way dialogue with the audience.

Previous attempts in this field have used Augmented Reality markers and QR codes, both of which demand a high degree of involvement from the user and require visually cumbersome markers to be inserted into the video. The Jazz ad is a beautiful rolling animation and a QR code was ruled out as it would have interfered with the imagery.

The other method considered, visual triggers, was also decided against: essentially, they're complex and require the user to point their phone at the screen for the duration of the ad. At the time, the available technology was also imperfect which meant that, from the user's point-of-view, the process would have been unlikely to work each time, leading to frustration.

The app Honda used, on the other hand, is triggered by sound cues. Once it's turned on, it 'listens' to the ad, which means that the user can move the phone around (rather than having to point it at the screen). The app was designed to work with the film playing back on any device, including via a PC or even a second iPhone with the app installed. The user holds the phone (with the app running) within hearing distance of the device playing the ad, and swipes the phone through the air when he or she sees a character on screen - if the timing is right, then that character is unlocked within the app, and the user can interact with them.

THE CAMPAIGN

The free app allowed viewers to collect up to seven characters from the ad, who can hop from TV to computer screen and even another iPhone before jumping onto their own handset. Each of the characters is interactive and you can play using some of the phone's functionality; a toy space monkey can be made to dance by singing into the phone, and a playful puppy chases its tail when you tickle it on screen.

The campaign aired from 1 February 2011, and viewers were directed to the online App Store where they could download the accompanying app.

THE RESULTS

The Jazz ad received 150,000 views on YouTube alone within six weeks of launch, and has now amassed 200,000 views in total. Two weeks after the UK launch, the app had been downloaded 10,000 times and the app demo film had been viewed more than 100,000 times on YouTube.

Honda also used social media monitoring tools to scan for mentions of the Honda Jazz online. Before the campaign launch there were around 100 Jazz conversations in an average month. Shortly after the release of the new Jazz campaign, this increased by 700%. Of the mentions tracked, 77% of them were positive and 14% neutral.

In the UK, Jazz orders increased by 14.6% year on year (February 2010 to February 2011), and although not directly attributable to the screen-hopping element of the campaign, it has made a strong contribution. Thanks to the app, Honda maintained significant interest in the Jazz and generated positive coverage on tech and online blogs, helping the company to attract a younger audience and keep them engaged beyond the TV ad - an important part of its long-term strategy.

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