



Brand Connectivity

CONNECTIONS CONSUMER INNOVATION

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All brands strive to connect with consumers, but - today - that's not enough. As with product R&D, innovation must be at the heart of every communications plan. Here are lessons from Coca-Cola's successful "Share a Coke" campaign.

Coca-Cola lives on the frontier of building better connections with consumers. This used to be a relatively straightforward, one-way exercise. Today, however, when every touch may lead to a response, or a forward or more content, consumers can encounter brand messages just about anywhere, at any time. Making all these connections consistent, relatable and relevant is the basis of achieving true "brand connectivity." And while it's not an easy task, it's not an optional one, either.

A great example of brand connectivity was Coca-Cola's 2011 "Share a Coke" campaign, launched in Australia. The campaign's purpose was to help the brand reconnect with its key audiences: teens and young adults. "Share a Coke" enabled different levels of user interaction (from "low engagement" to "highly interactive"), which was seamlessly integrated into the overall campaign. Based on the insight that people compensate for spending more time in the digital world by spending less time in the real world, Coke encouraged Aussies to "Share a Coke" with each other, thereby knitting the digital and real worlds together.

It was a big idea, smartly integrated and executed. "Share a Coke" was a brilliantly simple, social idea that got consumers caring and sharing across a maze of both digital and real life outlets. Its masterful combining of content and messaging in the right places at the right times – in ways that made it fun for consumers – maximized the likelihood that the brand's story would be told... and heard.

Sources: Integrated Planning: Standing Out in the Crowd, Millward Brown, 2011

A call to action is more important than ever.

Consider how every connection could prompt, ask or point people to another connection in your communications plan. Keep things rolling! The "Share a Coke" campaign took full advantage of this principle.

Ask people to react to something that doesn't require too much commitment.

Design communications with the objective of motivating (lots of) individuals to personally react, rather than putting out a call for mass participation. Many people don't want to get involved in something that feels enormous, or they believe their reaction won't matter. "Share a Coke" is a great example of not asking too much while still generating a large-scale response.

Plan a multichannel connections map.

To be seen and to generate a reaction, make sure your message covers all the important channels of communication. Thinking across paid, owned and earned media is the key to better connectivity.

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