



SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS NEED MORE SCALE AND 'SERIOUSNESS', NEW WARC STUDY ARGUES

- Short-term, low-budget social campaigns are common
- Many commercial campaigns featuring a social media element do not quantify their impact on sales, market share or other financial metrics
- Unilever, P&G and Kraft are the 'most social' brand owners on Warc

LONDON, EMBARGOED TO 00.01 GMT, MONDAY, JANUARY 28

Marketers need to apply the same seriousness to planning, budgeting and measuring campaigns with a social media element as is expected from the best traditional campaigns, argues a new report from Warc, the global marketing information service.

Analysis of almost **800** award-winning case studies containing a social media component has established that while brands' usage of the channel has grown rapidly, many published cases feature campaigns that are small-scale, short-term and lack quantified proof of their commercial effectiveness.

The report, *'Seriously Social'*, aims to stimulate industry debate over the effectiveness of social media for brand communications at a time when Facebook and other sites are focussed on monetizing their audiences by winning a greater share of marketing budgets.

It analysed cases with and without a social media element that won awards in a set of major international industry schemes* and were published on Warc between January 1, 2011, and September 30, 2012.

More than half of all cases published by Warc during the period involved a social media component. However, compared to the average among all cases on Warc, cases including social media activity were:

- shorter in duration
- involved lower budgets
- less likely to cite a quantified impact on sales, market share or other financial metrics as proof of their effectiveness.

In addition, cases featuring social media marginally under-indexed in wins of top 'Gold' awards (or their equivalent) in the schemes surveyed.

Overall, cases with a social media element accounted for more than **55%** of all cases in the sample, but only **51%** of Gold-winning cases.

Continues overleaf/



This under-performance was most marked among low-budget social media campaigns. In the sample studied, cases including social media accounted for **44%** of all cases with budgets of US\$500,000 or less, but only **28%** of Gold awards were won by social campaigns from the sub-US\$500,000 budget segment.

Examples of social media deployed as a commercially effective stand-alone platform, without integration with print, TV or other channels, were also rare.

The report – the full title of which is *'Seriously Social – a casebook of effectiveness trends in social media campaigns'* – argues that brands' usage of social media does not need to lack either ambition or rigour.

Its authors, Peter Field, the consultant, and Carlos Grande, editor of Warc, showcase more than a dozen cases of effective social media usage from around the world, and reference over 40 others. Examples cited include multi-channel initiatives featuring a core social media component from American Express, Kraft, Wal-Mart, Audi, AT&T and Virgin Mobile.

The authors call for marketers to become more serious about their social media activity and to enforce higher standards of planning, strategy and evaluation in social media campaigns.

They write: *"Growth in the usage of social media has outpaced growth in objective understanding of how to use it effectively for communications. It is time to bridge the knowledge gap."*

"Social media might not always be the right choice for every context. But in order for marketers to extract more value from their investments in this field, it is time for social media to be taken more seriously."

Based on their analysis of the most effective cases on Warc, the authors argue that success in the social media environment often depends on meeting four main challenges:

1. **Adopting a social mind set:** This approach focuses planners and insight teams on understanding what type of content will drive social currency within the target audience, and how to provide this content.
2. **Social articulation of a clear brand idea:** Best practice campaigns embody a clear brand idea. But they also show marketers being relaxed enough to encourage users to add their content and voices to campaign content in order to give an idea genuinely social expression.
3. **Scaling up of ambition:** Marketers need to review campaign budgets, duration and media integration to ensure these all help to capture the full benefits of their social activity. The best marketers can also distinguish themselves by their commitment to rigorous evaluation of social programmes.

Continues overleaf/



4. **Including key elements:** Components such as storytelling, calls to participation and taboo-breaking often feature in successful social campaigns. However, it is more important that brands work out which exact elements drive social currency for their audience than look for a rigid creative formula.

Other findings of the report include:

- The proportion of new cases on Warc that feature social media has **tripled** from 19% in 2009 to 57% in the most recent period (January to September, 2012).
- **Unilever** heads the list of the Top 15 brands/brand owners with the most social cases on Warc, with 46 award-winning examples. It is followed by **Procter & Gamble** (31), **Kraft** (18), **Mars** (15) and **Coca-Cola** (14).
- **Facebook** is the most mentioned social media owner in case studies on Warc, and is cited in 79% of case studies featuring social media published on Warc between January 1, 2012, and September, 30, 2012. During the same period, the percentage of Warc's cases mentioning **Twitter** (41%) overtook those mentioning **YouTube**, which has reached a plateau at approximately 40% of mentions in Warc cases.
- The **government/non-profit** sector is the category with the highest number of cases using social media in the Warc case study bank. It is followed by **food and drink and beverages**. **Utilities, pharmaceuticals** and **apparel** brands have the lowest number of cases including social media on Warc.

The full version of *'Seriously Social'* contains an Executive Summary and chapters on the social mindset, strategic and tactical approaches, reach and loyalty, budgets, measurement and future trends. It also issues an open invitation for practitioners with industry-advancing material to get in touch as future reports will include the best new material.

'Seriously Social – a casebook of effectiveness trends in social media campaigns' is [available](#) to all subscribers to the Warc service. To request a trial of the service, visit www.warc.com/trial. The stand-alone report can also be bought from the [Warc Store](#) priced from £295.

For enquiries, contact:

Carlos Grande
Editor, Warc
t: +44 (0207) 467 8130
m: +44 (0) 7831 491 856
e: carlos.grande@warc.com

Continues overleaf/



Notes for Editors

**Cases studied were all those published by Warc between January 1, 2011, and September 30, 2012, from the following awards schemes: APG UK, ARF Ogilvies, CAANZ Effies (New Zealand), Cannes Creative Effectiveness Lions, Cassies, DMA International ECHO, DMA UK, Effies (Australia), Effies (North America), Euro Effies, IPA Effectiveness Awards, Jay Chiat, Warc Prize for Innovation, Warc Prize for Asian Strategy.*

In the case of Warc Prizes, which award an overall Prize rather than Gold/Silver or Bronze classifications, selection for a Prize shortlist was deemed the equivalent of a Gold award.

About Warc

Warc Trend Reports summarise analysis, case studies and relevant high quality research on key topics such as mobile, shopper marketing and Asian marketing. The most recently published was the [Toolkit 2013](#), Warc's overview of the challenges facing brands this year.

All reports can be purchased individually online from the [Warc Store](#) or as part of subscriptions to the Warc service. Warc's premium online intelligence service, warc.com, includes more than 7,000 case studies and a huge resource of articles on new thinking and best practice across all areas of marketing. With users in over 100 countries, it is a unique resource relied upon by agencies, brand owners and media groups.

Alongside the Warc service we publish five highly respected magazines and journals: Admap, Market Leader, International Journal of Advertising, Journal of Advertising Research and International Journal of Market Research. We also host market leading conferences on key industry issues such as measuring advertising performance.

www.warc.com

@WarcEditors

ENDS