



RELEASING

INS

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THE POWER

IDE

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While Intel is a top 10 brand on the Interbrand Best Global Brands list (2013), in 2011 it was facing some challenges in that it was perceived as a brand that is inside every consumer gadget, even if it wasn't. Toshiba was similarly facing issues in that it was being perceived as a brand that was for your dad. To solve these big branding issues, Intel and Toshiba needed to find a way to create an emotional connection with the tech-savvy 18 to 34-year-old audience.

Timing is everything. In the same time frame, the Intel Inside Program (which is our platform for driving co-marketing campaigns with our partners) was being redesigned, which gave us a unique opportunity to use a "no rules" approach to co-marketing for a small window of time. We took the opportunity to help reshape co-marketing at Intel with great success.

We started with a non-traditional, simple brief to our creative agency, where we stated that we wanted to create an emotional connection with our audience with an experience that would surprise our audience and exceed their expectations. That was it. We had three agencies in on the pitch, and Pereira & O'Dell (POD), based in San Francisco, hit it out of the park with a social film concept. A social film is when you take a big blockbuster movie and mash it up with social networking, giving the audience the opportunity to participate by either auditioning to be in the film, talking to the characters online, or helping to steer the direction of the film.

Quite frankly, when POD presented the concept of a girl waking up in a room with no idea how she got there but occasionally allowed Internet access on her Toshiba laptop (with Intel Inside) to reach out to her social network for clues in hopes of being rescued, my heart was pounding. I was scared – a rare feeling for a marketer to have. We wanted to do something brave and daring that would capture the hearts and minds of the target audience, and we knew we were on to something. But – and it was a BIG but – it was a scary concept for Intel, a brand that is about being safe and reliable, and also for Toshiba, a quirky and happy kind of brand.

We then asked POD to ideate on additional concepts for the social film; they came back with six additional genre ideas, one of which happened to be 'The Beauty Inside,' our second social film. We fell in love with the romance approach and knew that it would be ideal for our second film once we'd had a chance to succeed with it. But since it was our first foray into creating a new form of entertainment, we felt it was necessary to enthrall our audience with the concept of a social film, and a thriller was the best way to achieve this. It was a "go big or go home" kind of moment, and we took the leap into the unknown.

Transmedia and the term 'branded content' were not yet well known back in 2011. We took advantage of social trends and media consumption behavior and engaged our audience across multiple social platforms for a single focused concept, which is essentially the idea behind transmedia storytelling. Branded content is all about creating an emotional connection with the audience, resulting in an increase in brand awareness, preference, and purchase consideration. This approach worked well with the 18 to 34-year-old audience, as this target is incredibly socially engaged, with video content becoming the norm in how they want to consume content. This approach proved to have a high exchange value, meaning that the audience was more than willing to give up their time (in six to eight



minute increments per week) to watch and participate in the film.

For our films, we decided to utilize Facebook as the primary hub for the audience experience and engagement, while YouTube was the underlying infrastructure for the video content and the auditions. The story engagement did utilize Twitter, Instagram, and Tumblr as well, but we deliberately steered the audience to engage on Facebook.

The social films performed beyond our expectations. Measurement has evolved over time for our social films based on our strategic goals and priorities. Originally our primary metric was view count, but it quickly evolved towards engagement. What I would like to measure is social capital. What is the value of someone commenting on a post or the value of someone sharing a post? Someone needs to hurry up and figure that one out. We also had a goal for the number of press articles in addition to clicks on "Where to Buy." The "Where to Buy" measurement is the newest measurement as we shift the films from a pure branding campaign into a demand generation campaign, without making the transition unpleasant for the consumer.

Our first social film was a psychological thriller called "The Inside Experience" with Emmy Rossum. It is about a girl who finds herself captured with only a Toshiba Ultrabook to reach the outside world, which she uses to connect with her social network to help her escape. The second social film was a romance titled "The Beauty Inside," which is about a man who has a strange condition causing him to wake every day in a different body, but one day he runs into the problem of falling in love. Our most recent social film, "The Power Inside," is a sci-fi comedy where the audience helped defeat an alien invasion. Each film received 50M, 70M and then 74M views, respectively. The films were promoted worldwide, translated into as many as eight different languages and delivered a unique experience for the viewer based on their language of choice and IP address. "The Inside Experience" won an Effie in addition to a Webby, while "The Beauty Inside" was awarded a Daytime Emmy, 11 Lions (three of which were Grand Prix) at Cannes and was the sixth most watched film of 2012. "The Power Inside" was the sixth most viral ad of 2013, won two Webbys, and was nominated for an Emmy as well. The average age of viewers was 23 for all three films. Press coverage included 182 articles, 285 articles, and then 525 articles respectively.

The greatest sign of success, though, is the emotional connection that was made with the audience through participation in each film. One of my favorite posts was from a girl on Facebook who was probably 13 years old. She posted, “Just realized my laptop is a Toshiba! <3.” The heart at the end got me. Here was a girl who previously saw her computer as a tool – not even caring who made it. After her involvement in the social film, she not only connected with Toshiba as the brand of her computer, but also with a sign of love. It truly made my brand marketer’s heart go pitty-pat.

While the genres have changed for each film, the underlying message of “it’s what’s inside that counts” is the thread throughout and is the Intel Inside message, while the Toshiba product has played a star role, almost as though it were a character in each of the films.

With each film, we have pushed for a new level of innovation. We ran the first film over 11 consecutive days in real time while the second social film was extended over a 8.5 week period. Our third social film took everything we learned from our first two social films and incorporated third-party brands with product placement in exchange for amplification of the film, but also took on the added complexity of driving demand for the product. Of course, the primary goal had always been to take a viewer from watching a film to buying a Toshiba product. The third-party brands provided giveaways for a sweepstakes that gently led the viewer down the path to purchase to Best Buy, where they could buy the system from the film and receive free Skullcandy headphones with the purchase. The product sold out before the end of the campaign.

We learned a tremendous amount about the audience; we also learned that we really could not predict or control what the audience would do. We had plans in place, from

security and privacy to moderation, but in the end none of that was needed as the audience did an amazing job of policing themselves. Leaders would self-identify and help steer the conversation, answering questions or redirecting them. We also learned that while it was good to give some guiderails for what kind of content we were looking for with auditions, dictating exactly what we wanted didn’t allow for enough creativity. The audience wanted their brilliance to shine.

I do believe that branded content and transmedia storytelling will continue to redefine marketing, especially in the social space. Content is becoming increasingly important, as we see consumers consuming more and more video content in particular. But we are all competing for the same eyeballs across platforms, and so engaging content is critical. Transmedia storytelling gives engagement another boost, allowing the audience to feel like a part of what is being created and to feel a vested interest because they are a part of making the content successful.

As for social film, I have been asked questions by other storytellers about the high production value and the bar now being set so high. I do feel that our production value was a key component to the success of the films, but keep in mind that we set out to compete against summer blockbusters for eyeballs and engagement. We felt that the high production value was critical, but that isn’t necessary for everyone. Branded content can be incredibly simple as long as the value exchange for the consumer is there and an emotional connection established. 

Links to the content:

www.insidefilms.com for 'The Power Inside'

<http://vimeo.com/album/2229079> 'The Beauty Inside'

