

While You Weren't Watching...

# BRANDS CHANGED THE WAY THEY SPEAK WITH US

The 90s welcomed the digital age. The media landscape was set to change forever. Almost overnight the internet added a whole new dimension to media. The digital revolution gave consumers more control over the information they received, when they received it and where.

Volume II of While You Weren't Watching shows just how far and how fast the communication process has changed. Customers are no longer prepared to be on the receiving end of one-way communication. They want entertainment, experiences, involvement and interaction. And where possible, they value the opportunity for a two-way conversation.

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# HOW DO WE KNOW THIS?

The Mitchell Communication Group (Mitchell's) commissioned a qualitative research study to explore the new ways that brands were trying to connect with their customers. The study, conducted by Mark McCrindle, canvassed the opinions of a broad range of people from '20 somethings' to '60 somethings' in Sydney, Melbourne and Auckland.

## THE RESEARCH EXPLORED PEOPLE'S REACTIONS TO A WIDE RANGE OF NEW MEDIA IDEAS, INCLUDING:

- branded events
- brand experience
- virtual worlds
- user-generated content
- branded content

This Volume II edition encapsulates the findings from this research, together with opinions from experts within the communications industry.

## SOME HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- young and old are equally engaged online
- age determines, not if, but how technology is used
- media interest in virtual worlds like Second Life outweighs user involvement
- internet users expect brand placement and welcome commercial involvement, so long as it is entertaining not intrusive
- people are still looking for a real experience.

# NOW IS THE TIME TO DESIGN YOUR BRAND WITH PEOPLE.

The following content provides convincing evidence that for any brand to succeed, there are many new and exciting ways to embrace our interactive consumer and build a relationship they will remember.

LINK THROUGH TO OUR EXPERT INTERVIEW'S WHEN YOU SEE THIS SYMBOL



## 20 SOMETHINGS

### VIRALLY CONNECTED, PARTICIPATION FOCUSED AND SOCIALLY DRIVEN

The 20 somethings in our groups said they loved to share. They actively use sites like Facebook and YouTube. 55% had contributed to a blog or online forum and 62% had uploaded video to YouTube. This group is used to having access to information 24/7.

In regards to advertising, 20 somethings accept that it is part of life, but find online advertising more intrusive than other forms (especially things like pop-ups or spam email). They like the way advertising is moving forward and are very interested in the notion of a more interactive experience.



## 40-60 SOMETHINGS

### TECHNICALLY ENGAGED, MOVING OFFLINE TO ONLINE, FRAGMENTED BEHAVIOUR

40-60 somethings are also engaged with technology. Even if not fully engaged with user-generated sites like MySpace, most have experience of writing or reading a blog (on sites like Trip Advisor or CNet) and many have also used technology like Skype to communicate with friends or family overseas. They feel comfortable moving what was traditionally offline, online, such as internet banking or shopping. And while they carry some degree of caution, it does not stop them using their credit card to purchase tickets to concerts or to sell products on sites such as eBay.



# BRANDED EVENTS

Brands that engage in customised branded events do so by creating events around categories that are of high interest to their audience. Central to these events is an experience centred on having fun with the brand as opposed to securing a sale.

## Mini Cirque



In February 2007, when Mini wanted to launch its latest model it staged a 'Mini Cirque'. It committed 40% of its marketing budget to it and took a step that surprised many by creating a Cirque tour that travelled from Brisbane to Sydney to Melbourne.

The event was targeted to an exclusive VIP guest list that included Mini car dealers, existing customers and 'wannabe' Mini drivers. The Cirque provided an entertaining environment with trapeze artists, dancers, and an outdoor cinema, fully equipped with staff serving popcorn and drinks. There were miniature Minis to race around circuits or you could drive the real thing around the park. Clearly an amazing effort on Mini's behalf, but what did people think of the event?

Our research revealed people couldn't believe that a brand would go to such an effort to put on something so big for free. An event with entertainment for friends and family was something people were excited by. There was also the word-of-mouth aspect. People felt that if you were lucky enough to be invited to such an event, you would be telling peers about it.



*“You'd probably feel like part of the family because it's an exclusive event, giving you a feeling of being part of a larger group of people that shares the same interests.”*

Steve, 52 years.

## BENEFIT TO THE BRAND

### 1. Creates lasting memories, builds trust

This is one of the few ways that a brand can create real-life, lasting memories. This in itself elicits positive feelings towards the brand because it is seen to be giving something back to the customer.

### 2. Appears confident and aspirational

This demonstrates a brand that has chosen to spend money on an event for its customers. This portrays a confident brand that believes in itself and therefore becomes aspirational for people.

### 3. Subtly opens doors

Being invited to an enjoyable event with no sales pressure results in an audience that is more open to hearing what the brand has to say.

### 4. Exclusivity builds loyalty

People felt like they were part of an exclusive club. They feel important and confident in the knowledge that the brand understands the kind of person they are.

### 5. Word of mouth

It doesn't really matter if you are invited to an event like this or not, people who attend the event will tell people about it anyway.

## RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

### 1. Make it free

Developing a branded event is about the brand giving back to the customer and this means putting it on for free. If a brand charged for the event, it would suddenly be competing with all other forms of entertainment.

### 2. Make it relevant to the brand

The Mini Cirque worked well for Mini, it was quirky and stylish just like the car. When planning branded events, start with looking at what the brand stands for and how these values can be transferred to an event.

# BRAND EXPERIENCE

Remember the dancing toothbrush you saw wandering down Queen Street in your lunch hour last year? Or did you happen to see an ATM lying next to you on the beach on Bondi beach in the summer of 2006? If you do remember any of these weird and wonderful things, chances are you have come across a brand experience.

Rather than seen as a nice add-on to an existing campaign, they are now one of the most discussed subjects within marketing circles.

The good thing about brand experience in terms of connecting with audiences is that making connections are the sole focus. The emphasis moves from pushing a one-way message towards creating a physical interaction, a conversation in a light-hearted, non-intrusive way.

## ANZ ATM Everywhere

In 2006, when ANZ created its advertising campaign to let people know it had more ATM machines, it developed a brand experience to support other media activity. The brand experience took the life-like ATM machines from the campaign and created life-like characters that hit the streets of Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Brisbane.

Both young and old were highly engaged by the brand experiences. The fact one could reach out and touch the brand was very appealing. Especially to the younger ones who spend a lot of time online - the appeal was even greater because of the 'realness' of it all. It was seen as a novelty during their day, something fun and entertaining that they would remember.

**“Because there is so much advertising going on, people have to come up with new and personal things. They have to relate to people personally before they will feel anything anymore.”**

Jackie, 25 years.

### BENEFIT TO THE BRAND

#### 1. Brings out the personality in the brand

A brand experience allows the brand to demonstrate a tangible personality through actions rather than words. It offers an environment where subtle personality traits of the brand can be brought to life.

#### 2. Stands out in the sea of advertising

A brand experience enables the brand to stand out by connecting with audiences through the power of the senses – touch, smell, hearing, sight and taste.

### RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

#### 1. Plan well from the outset

Include brand experience expertise at the start of campaign planning, rather than as an ad-on if there is budget remaining.

#### 2. Link to the brand's core idea

Understand the brand's core idea and integrate everything the brand experience offers to that thought.

#### 3. Inject personality, but be aware of intrusion

While the personality of a brand can be highlighted in a brand experience, be mindful of how the personality is brought to life. A successful brand experience is one where people are drawn to the brand, not have it imposed on them.



# VIRTUAL WORLDS

Three-dimensional technology is fast becoming the new online evolution. Online virtual worlds are environments where you can create a character and develop a life in a virtual world. Obviously you can't physically go there, but the people you meet and the brands you engage are real.

Virtual worlds offer new ways for brands to connect with people. Unlike traditional advertising, these connections are unlimited and will further contribute to the changing relationship between people and brands.

***“It's something you need a lot of time for and people don't have time these days and in the long run it's probably not very helpful for people's social skills. People become isolated and it can be a bad thing.”***

Kathryn, 26 years.

## Second Life

One virtual world that owes its entire evolution to its users is Second Life. It is also the world that is the most talked about, at least for now. Brands like Nike, Starwood Hotels, and American Apparel, are experimenting with the virtual world's potential and are finding opportunities that do not exist in the real world.

Experts are forecasting huge growth in this area. Gartner predicts that “80% of active internet users will have some kind of a 'second life' in a virtual world by 2011.”

Second Life has no set agenda. The attraction is that it is created by people and is as dynamic as individuals want it to be. It is a world where the residents are creating experiences for other people.

Initially it was a difficult concept for non-users to comprehend, but it was something they could see taking off in the future, even though they may be slow to adopt it. They liked the fantasy element of it and said seeing a brand they knew on there would give them comfort. However, they also struggled to see how they would find the time to get into it and worried it would heighten the socialisation problems in society.



## BENEFIT TO THE BRAND

### 1. Offers diverse ways to connect

Brands have the opportunity to test the viability of new products. And the potential to trial things like new product innovations, brand design and so on is unlimited.

### 2. Invites global interaction

Having a presence in virtual worlds allows brands to demonstrate their brand in a more interactive way to new potential markets outside their reach in the real world.

### 3. Develops a new kind of relationship

Using new ways to connect, brands are engaging with consumers through involvement, community, and collaboration, user generated content and entertainment. Virtual living offers an unsurpassed level of all of these things.

## RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

### 1. Strategic direction is top priority

Many brands fail to connect with audiences here because they lack clear objectives or any long term planning about the brand's presence in a virtual world.

### 2. The cost of a presence is ongoing

It takes time to set up and maintain. This is not a 'set and forget' environment for your brand. A brand's staff will need to monitor the sites 24/7 to ensure positive brand relationships are being developed, talking to people one-on-one.

### 3. Think collaboration and creation

Your success in virtual worlds will depend upon more than a billboard ad. Spend time researching the environment. What is the motivation for people being there? What is attractive to them? How do people communicate? How are groups formed? And how can your brand facilitate these things?

### 4. Learn from the technology

Virtual worlds will not appeal to every brand. Yet, there can be important learnings to be made in understanding what the technology could offer one's brand. Could there be an opportunity to integrate this type of technology in your business in the future?

### 5. Re-define measurement criteria

Reach and frequency models do not apply when it comes to understanding the value of a presence in a virtual world. The value is the level of individual engagement with your brand. So consider:

- how long people are spending with the brand
- how many people you have as 'friends' or part of your 'group'
- who they are talking to about your brand
- how it is translating into their perception of the brand in the real world

# USER GENERATED CONTENT

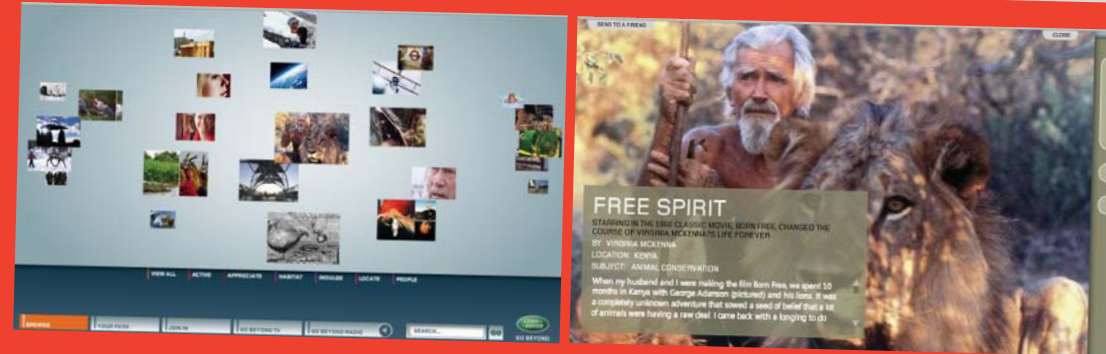
User generated content and social networking have gained their fair share of hype recently. In a short space of time, the online environment has moved from simply linking information to now being a vehicle that brings people together, to share information, give opinion and create communities. The prolific growth will continue.

Recently, Brand Channel's readers ranked Wikipedia as the number 4 brand that influences the way we live. These kinds of brands now have a huge influence over our society.

While consumers love these sites for what they offer (community, creativity and collaboration), brands are faced with a challenging environment to navigate. They are no longer in control of the environment, but are attempting to engage an audience in a consumer-controlled environment, where traditional advertising is not seen to belong.

## Land Rover

Land Rover launched (www.gobeyond.com) a site dedicated to people telling stories about 'adventure'. This 'sense of adventure' was the common link between the brand and the consumer. The site features a number of stories posted from people around the world telling stories about their adventures in life.



**“Real life experiences do sway people to go towards a product. It brings a personal connection into it.”**

Claudia, 24 years.

### BENEFIT TO THE BRAND

#### 1. Done well, it builds credibility

Inviting consumers to participate in communications adds to a brand's credibility. It reflects a brand that understands the current communications environment and is openly embracing it.

#### 2. Creates a sense of collaboration and community

The attraction of brands embracing user-generated contributions is about building relationships, communities and a collaborative feeling.

#### 3. Provides a non-intrusive way to engage with the audience

Consumer generated content is viewed as non-intrusive. Rather than pushing people to buy a product, it is most often about people telling their stories. From our research, audiences were less likely to walk away because they did not feel they had to commit to anything.

### RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

#### 1. Give control to your audience

Giving control to the audience means letting go of your brand and inviting your audience in. It is a challenging thing to do, but user generated campaigns need to be just this – user generated.

#### 2. Drive traffic through supporting media

If the campaign is online, keep in mind that people rarely spend their time wandering aimlessly online. They are there for a specific reason. Lead people to the site through an integrated campaign.

#### 3. Tell the full story

Tell the full story - the good, the bad and the ugly - anything less will be considered fake and invite scepticism.

#### 4. Have a contingency plan if things go wrong

Engaging in user generated content can leave your brand in a vulnerable position. Spend time upfront scenario planning (considering what could happen, implications to the brand and how the brand might react to any negative activity).

# BRANDED CONTENT

Branded content covers everything from product placement, to the inclusion of content in existing programming, right through to branded events.

Instead of content driven by price, features and benefits, the focus is on entertaining and engaging people, using interesting personalities and storylines. It's content that evokes emotions, a sense of adventure and ultimately takes the user on a journey.

Our research found people enjoyed being part of the experience and felt like they were participating due to the emotional appeal. They were pulled into story lines, seeing them as funny, entertaining, interesting, sad, and informative.

There wasn't the usual negativity about intrusive advertising and part of this was due to the recognition that brands weren't being pushy. As a result, people were inclined to feel empathy towards the brand and more likely to consider it in a decision-making process.

## Kraft's, Chef to the Rescue



In a joint project with MSN, Kraft created a site called Chef to the Rescue. Hosted by celebrity chef, Cat Coro, Chef to the Rescue ([www.cheftotherescue.com](http://www.cheftotherescue.com)) produces weekly webisodes, featuring easy-to-prepare meals for home.



*“They’re good because they don’t force it on you with a Kraft ad in the show. They’ve just got the brand of the cheese so you’d think ‘oh I’ve seen that brand’ when you’re in the supermarket.”*

Danny, 41 years.

## RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

### 1. Develop strategic goals aligned to the brand

Take the time to ensure that your brand is integrated seamlessly into the content. If you are creating your own content, consider what core elements of your brand need to be portrayed. If you are incorporating your brand into existing content, think about the fit between your brand's core essence and the program's core essence.

### 2. Content is paramount

Any content will reflect on how the brand is perceived. The words used to describe the content will become the words used to describe that brand.

### 3. Change content constantly

Be dynamic, flexible and fluid in content delivery. Consumers are looking for content on the go, that they can pick up and run with, whenever and wherever.

### 4. Challenge traditional measurement methods

Audience numbers may be smaller than mass media forms, but, while the immediate audience might be smaller, this is just the beginning - the viral element is where momentum builds. The fact that you can email material at the push of a button and talk about it is just the tip of the iceberg in terms of spreading the brand's message.

## BENEFIT TO THE BRAND

### 1. The content reflects the essence of the brand

Brand association with content is key. Chef to the Rescue content was deemed 'helpful' and therefore Kraft became viewed as a helpful brand. So even if the branding is subtle, the experience is very much about time with the brand.

### 2. Increases the desire to purchase

When shown branded content examples, people said they would feel more inclined to purchase that brand. Branded content allows the viewer to experience the brand in an entertaining environment.

### 3. Generates word of mouth globally

Branded content that's online allows a brand to reach people globally. And with associated blogs, the word of mouth about content, such as Chef to the Rescue, is spread even further.

## LAST THOUGHTS

Engaging with audiences effectively is about developing ideas that resonate. Rather than join the frantic race to stand out from the crowd by being bigger and more vocal, build a model around effective engagement that allows brands to concentrate on targeting the right people in meaningful ways.

The many media choices we have today offer new opportunities to build communication ideas that are more targeted. It may mean talking to a smaller group of people, but it allows the encounter to be more relevant and in turn, more fruitful.

If you would like to talk to us about how your brand can engage in new media environments, please contact our Consumer Insights Strategist, Carmen Campbell on (02) 92844497.

## ABOUT WHILE YOU WEREN'T WATCHING

While You Weren't Watching was established by Mitchell's in 2006 to meet the challenge of keeping up with the fast-paced changes taking place in today's communications landscape.

We provide marketers and communication specialists thorough, unbiased and insightful reviews of the changes taking place.

It exists because we believe this is an exciting time to build better brands by embracing change.

You can **subscribe** by going to [whileyouwerentwatching.com](http://whileyouwerentwatching.com) to ensure you stay in the loop.

# THE TEAM

The WYWW team brings together a broad range of communication specialists from Mitchell's.



**Carmen Campbell**  
**Consumer Insights Strategist & Insights Director of WYWW**

Carmen is the founder and insights director of WYWW. A regular contributor to its content, she leads the WYWW brand. With a background in psychology, she specialises in consumer insights and works within the strategy team at Mitchell's Sydney.



**Helen Barnes**  
**Research Analyst**

Helen is a research analyst for the Mitchell's group. Her passion for understanding markets and change make her a key contributor to WYWW. Outside of this role, Helen has 3 published novels and produced a feature film.



**Nick Bryant-Smith**  
**Trend watcher for WYWW**

Nick is a trend watcher for WYWW, monitoring news and trends. He loves digital media, his main area of interest being how new technologies are changing the way people interact.



**Angus Frazer**  
**Strategy Director, Sydney**

Angus has 12 years' experience in the development of communications strategy and planning and has worked extensively in Sydney and London. His philosophy on strategy is to question everything and explore all the possibilities of connecting brands and people through unique ideas.



**Neil Burton**  
**Strategist**

Neil began his career in experiential marketing but for the last 2 years has been a valuable member of the strategy team. Neil is famous for consistently challenging traditional thinking to ensure the best consumer connections are achieved.



**Paolo Modolo**  
**Digital Strategist**

Paolo is a specialist in the digital space and his expertise is in his understanding of digital, from social media and mobile through to effective DR tactics.



**John Alderton**  
**Director of Research**

John is the founder of the Mitchell Knowledge Centre (MKC), Mitchell's research department. The MKC team provides tools for understanding consumer targets and is responsible for media tracking, forecasting and an array of publications to staff and clients.



**Robert Frew**  
**Research Analyst**

Robert is a Melbourne based research analyst for Mitchell's. He is a trained statistician and also lectures in Media Strategy at RMIT.

## THANKS TO:

Kraft – Chef to the Rescue  
Land Rover – gobeyond.com  
Mini – Mini Cirque  
ANZ – ATM Everywhere  
ABC – ABC Second Life island

Mark McCrindle – Social Researcher, McCrindle Research  
Peter Stickels, Principal, Peter Stickels Planning Pty Ltd

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