

BRANDED CONTENT IN SHAPE OF A STORY AS THE ADVERTISING FORMULA FOR THE WEB

(Abstract)

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This topic is relevant in today's advertising, because the future of advertising and traditional media is uncertain. We're moving toward a digital and social paradigm, in which the distribution model of content is no longer centralized, and this affects advertising. The emergence of web as a new platform can be a double-edged sword, hence the importance of knowing how to advertise in this relatively new medium. Undoubtedly, the future of advertising is on the web, because that's where the audience is. Although, the options for online advertising that currently exist are not good at all (banners, pop ups...), due to the negative reactions they cause. **How can a brand be successful communicating on the web?** This is the question I try to answer in the thesis.

If we analyze the web, we notice that video is what succeeds at becoming viral. In view of that, Branded Content seems to be the best way for advertising to get viral. Therefore, **my goal is to research about it from the storytelling perspective, because that is the best tool for presenting branded content.** Indeed, there is a void in the field of empirical measurement of the effectiveness of B.C.

For achieving this, **I did a case study consisting of the analysis of several spots with different formats and structures** (traditional advertising and B.C.) having in common either business area or product type.

The results were analyzed by the comparative method. In particular, comparative method of concordance, in which objects agree on one point but disagree on the rest. I've chosen this method because it is the most suitable for working with qualitative research and with limited means. The data collection was made by a survey of people belonging to a target between 22-45 years old. Its purpose was to explore the consumer feedback differences. I.e. to see which of the two cases, with different structures but the same end, is more efficient.

Regarding the main findings, I must clarify that these shouldn't be generalized due to the limitations of the thesis. They are the following: firstly, the story beats the argument.

Second, B.C. is more suitable for the integration between traditional media and web in a campaign, and for using Youtube as a broadcasting platform. Thirdly, advertisements should tell a story (as opposed to the conventional spot) if the target is between 20 and 45 years old. Fourthly, for connecting to this target, the creation of content for devices like Smart phones, Smart TV etc. is essential. Lastly, in order to advertise efficiently on the web, banners need to be replaced by good Branded Content.

Finally, there are some recommendations for future research. In order to generalize findings, the thesis could be extended with a bigger sample. Another recommendation is to investigate and analyze in depth the five functional modes of Branded Content (G. Romero 2013): "keeping the audience in time" through episodic content; "be credible and truth" communicating honestly; "building meaning" through action rather than words; create conversations about the brand; build social relevance.