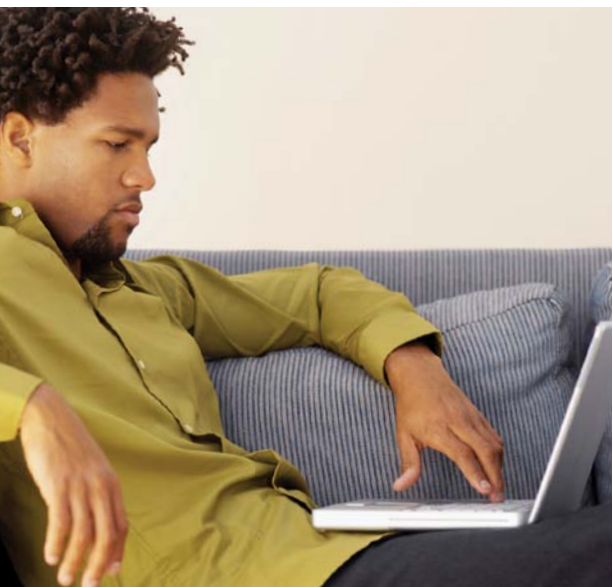


Cricket Buzzes With Radio and Social Media



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—Deborah Jourdan
Sr. Director of Consumer Marketing
Cricket



The numbers are staggering; every 24 hours over 400 million users log on to Facebook, more than 200 million Tweets are sent, and over three billion videos are viewed on YouTube.

But for brands and marketers social media can be a frustrating puzzle.

The potential audience is intriguing, and because the basic premise of social media focuses on content from users instead of brands, building consumer engagement for a product or service online can be quite challenging.

One highly effective solution to the problem is to combine the strengths of social media with the reach of a steadfast advertising medium much like Cricket® Communications did with their highly successful Wallet Drop campaign.

“The buzz about the promotion was much greater when we went beyond our social media and Web pages and incorporated our radio partners,” says Deborah Jourdan, the company’s Sr. Director of Consumer Marketing.

Cricket Expands Its National Footprint With Local Relevance

In just ten years, Cricket Wireless has grown from being a regional provider of wireless telephone service to a nationwide company with nearly 6 million customers and a marketing budget that Kantar Media reports was over \$72

million in 2010 including just over \$12.6 million in local and national radio advertising.

Despite the company’s rapid growth, Jourdan says their marketing efforts have remained focused, “Even as we’re adding new markets and growing the brand, we’ve primarily been a local marketer using a mix of radio, TV, and out of home.”

The local focus helps the company reach their target customers who Jourdan describes as, “Real-life value seekers—Target and Costco shoppers who enjoy getting a good deal.”

She says radio plays an important role for Cricket because it can reach the right people and get them to act. “Of our tools, we see radio as one that is closest to the end of the brand funnel. It can drive people to the store to take action.”

She also says radio’s flexibility is valuable. “We are in a highly competitive industry. Radio allows us to quickly change messaging points and offers—much more so than TV or out of home.”

Those messages are delivered through both recorded spots and by retaining personalities in almost every market on a nearly year-round basis for product endorsements.

“We don’t just pay for the endorsement and walk away,” says Jourdan. “We actively engage with the endorsers, and that makes a difference in how they talk about us.”



The company's local marketing managers are in regular contact with the personalities supplying them with new products and information about Cricket's offerings. The result is a stronger bond that comes through to the listeners; "We use endorsers who are trusted in their community and they get people who wouldn't normally consider trying Cricket."

Radio Helps Cricket Make the Market Chirp

Like almost every other company, over the last few years Cricket has also become much more active in social media marketing.

"It started off as us trying to build community on the top social networking sites; Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. We were just trying to gain a presence," says Jourdan.

But over time she says social media has grown to serve a dual role for Cricket as a customer service tool and a vehicle for word-of-mouth promotions, "A lot of our promotional activity actually points to these sites now."

One shining example of that promotional activity is the Wallet Drop campaign.

Designed to build the company's level of social media interaction and drive traffic into retail locations, the two-week

promotion focuses on a number of Cricket Wireless-branded wallets that contain prizes including free phones and cash in denominations ranging from one dollar to a \$5,000 grand prize.

During the promotion, the wallets are "dropped" in pre-selected public locations and consumers who follow the company's social media feeds receive clues that lead them to the hidden prizes.

But instead of just throwing the campaign into the sea of social media and hoping consumers notice, Cricket supports the effort with radio advertising.

Cricket's team of radio endorsers talk about the giveaways on the air and post clues about the hidden wallets on their own Twitter and Facebook feeds.

According to Jourdan, the campaign always results in a significant increase in followers on Facebook and Twitter and strong foot traffic from people coming into stores to redeem their prize vouchers and learn about their products.

Radio and Social Media Prove to Be a Valuable Combination

Even more important to Jourdan is the high level of online chatter about Cricket that the promotion creates. "During the Wallet Drop campaign, our followers were

reposting information from our pages to their own, which is what we focus on. We feel the number of people talking about our brand is the most important measure of success."

After initially executing the campaign in eight markets, Jourdan says the Wallet Drop, with radio tie-ins, has become a local marketing best practice for the company.



Photo courtesy of Cricket® Wireless

She says the most important lesson for other marketers looking to integrate social and traditional media is to plan carefully to maximize both outlets, "Pause and take a step back; make sure you are leveraging the opportunity by encouraging sharing both from your social media sites and your media partners."

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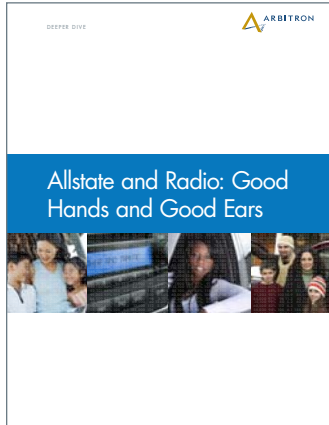


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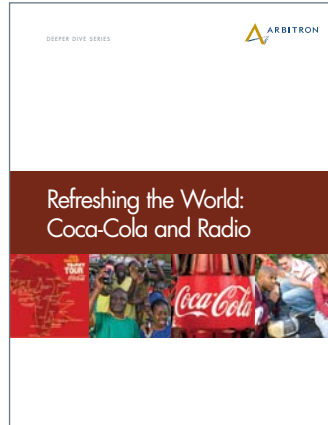
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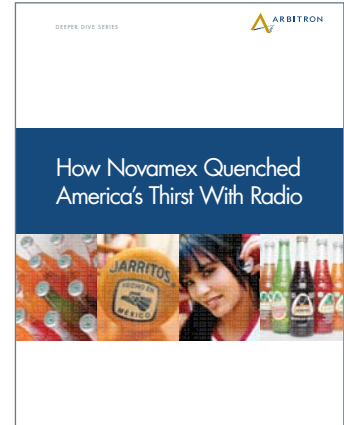
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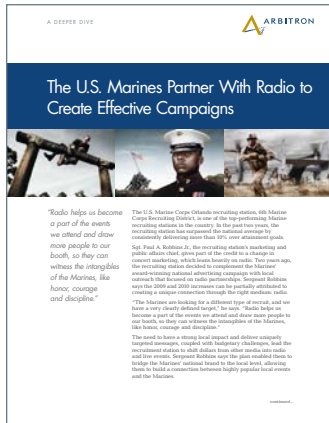
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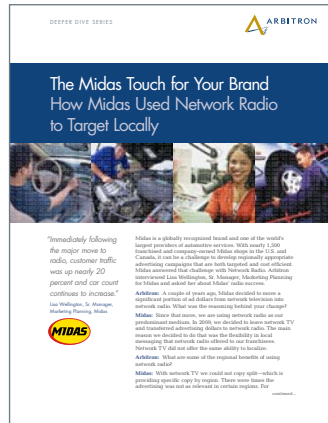
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