

## Adobe: Metrics, not myths

Source: Effies (North America), Silver, North America Effies 2014

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This case study describes a US business to business (B2B) campaign by Adobe, the software company, promoting its digital marketing measurement solutions through a series of myth-busting videos and ads.

- The company was better known for its creative software: initially a hindrance but became a strength of the campaign as it allowed the brand to bring a new perspective to digital marketing.
- A series of online videos highlighted myths in digital marketing and presented Adobe as knowing the answers.
- Digital ads appeared on websites where marketers were likely to seek inspiration, and a post Super Bowl video discussed the wisdom of the event's high associated adspend.
- The campaign increased brand performance on key metrics, increased website traffic and exceeded sales goals.

Category: **Software**

Brand/client: **Adobe / Adobe**

Lead agency: **Goodby, Silverstein & Partners**

Contributing agencies: **Edelman**



## State of the marketplace & brand's business

Think of Adobe, and the image most of us have is of creative tools for the creative world. For over 30 years, software such as Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign and the entire Creative Suite have dominated the creative category.

However, there is another side to Adobe. Beginning with the acquisition of Omniture in 2009, Adobe has evolved from a "make" to a "make and measure" company. Adobe's Marketing Cloud solutions measure, track, target, evaluate, analyze and, hopefully, add insight to what marketers are doing across all digital media.

This new online marketing space has been not only a fresh opportunity for Adobe but a gold rush for hundreds, if not thousands, of vendors. Some are from well-known and established brands (IBM, Google, Salesforce, Microsoft); others are from providers who are certainly here today, but could very well be gone tomorrow.

In the midst of all this, Adobe's key challenge was growth—Adobe needed the momentum to be identified not just as a resource for the creative studio but also as a partner for the marketing department and the boardroom.

## Strategic communications challenge

The overall client brief was *"to establish an ownable and credible position within the digital measurement category that is distinct from the competition and true to the Adobe brand."* Boiling this down meant four things:

- i. Persuading the persuaders: we were addressing senior marketers and trying to get the attention of a group of people who spend their days working to get the attention of everyone else.
- ii. Clarity: Adobe wanted to avoid adding to the gnat swarm of claims, confusion, double-talk, ambiguity and sheer smoke and mirrors that fills the digital marketing space.
- iii. An "Adobean" point of view: the Marketing Cloud had to be able to talk to the boardroom, but it had to do it in a way that didn't feel as though Adobe had morphed violently away from its roots as a creative brand.
- iv. Legitimacy and "tonnage": other brands "own the C-suite". Adobe was competing against the 800-pound gorillas of the space such as IBM, Salesforce, Google and Microsoft. Adobe needed to trump their proven track records in ways that would demonstrate we were as, if not more, effective in proving (and improving) marketing effectiveness. We would be up against high-spending, long-tenured competitors.

## Objectives & KPIs

Moving Adobe into the world of measurement is a game we've just begun. The success of this first year of initiatives was measured in three key areas:

(1) Campaign engagement: yes, it sounds obvious, but for Adobe to begin to add velocity in a new space, it had to earn engagement/PR and social media activity around its campaign. Marketers are "fixated on social," and they'd need to see that the marketing was working by an increase in social activity from our campaign.

(2) Key perceptions: working with Adobe, we identified that campaign engagement should work to elevate perceptions on five key leadership statements as measured by a pre/post lift among senior marketers:

- Offers a complete digital solution
- Is shaping the future of digital marketing
- Is the leader in the digital-marketing industry
- Has the solutions to prove that marketing works
- Provides leading solutions for digital marketers

(3) Meeting these objectives would lead to our most important objectives: driving interest and inquiries which would manifest themselves in sales increases. During the campaign period, interest in Adobe Marketing Cloud would be measured through search queries, site visits and direct sales inquiries to Adobe. The sales goal was defined as achieving double-digit sales growth as compared to the year prior.

## Insight

The average tenure of the CMO/senior marketer is only 22 months. That's half a presidential term. They are ushered in as transformational "change agents," but as we heard from CMOs themselves, it's nowhere near as easy as it sounds. In addition to the ongoing pressures of business, they are acutely aware that the digital data storm is not only brewing but raining down daily. Under increasing pressure to prove their worth, they operate knowing that if they don't have the right solution in place, the 22-month average is more likely to be a dream than a reality. (Sources: Agency Qualitative, IBM Institute for Business Value, 2011)

In a series of interviews with senior marketers/CMOs from a range of businesses, it was clear that the audience was both worried and skeptical—worried that they were not going to find the right answer, but skeptical about the "black box" solutions and "white paper" ideas on offer. They certainly didn't need more so-called experts in a category overrun with them. What they were asking for was someone to listen to what was happening, to *practically* address it and to behave as partners to them rather than strategic superiors.

These results suggested that there was an opportunity for Adobe. Given the brand's proven "creative" status and heritage with marketers, it was given an outsider's permission to bring a different perspective to bear. (Source: Agency research with senior marketer/CMO audience)

Added to this there was the day-to-day reality of marketing. The truth is that on a good day we work in a business that can politely be called "intuitively and data driven." On a bad day it feels like fluff. On a really bad day, it's bullshit. We know it, and our clients (the audience) know it too.

To jolt our audience into realizing there is a better way of handling the tidal wave of data from an unexpected

source, we decided to call out the industry, comically identify some of its pain points and convolutions and suggest that hard metrics could trump theory and prove that marketing adds real value. We called it the "fresh not hot air" strategy. Rather than add to the complexity, we'd stop the nonsense and show Adobe as the solution that would deal with the real needs of the digital marketer.

## The big idea

**Don't guess; know.**

## Bringing the idea to life

*"Marketing is BS. That's baloney." / "Social media is worthless. That's crazy talk." / "Marketers hate big data. Hogwash." / "Half your adspend is wasted. Au contraire." / "Managing websites is hell. Nope."*

To get into the argument around digital marketing we chose to highlight the arguments (and nonsense) themselves. The "Metrics, Not Myths" campaign began with opinion based print that showed how Adobe dispelled the most common myths in digital marketing and how decisions made with Marketing Cloud led to real results.

In parallel with this, we ran a high-profile series of videos. *BS Detector*, *Robot* and *Slap* ran across influential sites to dramatize the absurdities, inefficiencies, half-truths and all too common realities of the marketing space. In a second wave of videos, *Psychologist* and *Fortune Teller* dramatized the lengths marketers will go to to find answers to the question "Is my marketing working?"

We were dealing with a relatively small budget (IBM spends \$43 million a quarter—we spent one-tenth of that). (Source: Competitrack) Rather than stick to destinations where marketing is the focus, we sought our audience in places where they might seek a bit of inspiration—or at least a reprieve from the day. Working with sites such as Mashable, Fast Company, Golf Digest, and the Onion, we created custom content that sought to dispel myths and fact-shuffling jargon. Our no-nonsense, straightforward approach played off the surrounding editorial content and got our audience to lean forward into the middle of the experience.

And, of course, this being marketing, we chose the Super Bowl as a topical event to pose questions about the sanity of all that marketing money spent (and usually not measured). In *Animal* a talking horse (thanks Budweiser) and a monkey (ditto E\*Trade) debated the wisdom of the yearly TV ad fest. The video ran on the day *after* the big game and capitalized on the postgame commentary on all the spots that had run the previous day.

## Communication touch points

### Interactive/Online

- Brand Website/Microsite
- Developed Branded Content for Another Website
- Digital Video

- Search Engine Mktg. (SEM/SEO)

## Print

- Magazine - Print
- Newspaper - Print
- Trade/Professional

## Additional marketing components

- None

## Paid media expenditures

### September 2012 - August 2013

- \$10 - 20 million

### September 2011 - August 2012

- Not Applicable

## Budget

- Less than other competitors.
- Not applicable to prior year.

## Owned media & sponsorship

Adobe Marketing Cloud has a Facebook page and Twitter handle. [Adobe.com](http://Adobe.com) serves as a product overview site. Additionally, Adobe holds an annual conference for marketers where the "Metrics, Not Myths" campaign was incorporated into the event.

## Results

The "Metrics, Not Myths" campaign launched in October 2012. By the end of August 2013, it had already made a significant impact with senior marketers across all our objectives.

First and most obviously, the campaign was instantly recognized as a different take on B2B advertising. Some commentators loved it: "*The world's greatest holistically curated TV spot that delivers cross-segment synergies — artisanally*" (George Parker, AdScam).

And, yes, some didn't: "*Another blue-chip brand is turning to what was once called blue language to help stand out in a cluttered advertising landscape*" (Stuart Elliot, *New York Times*).

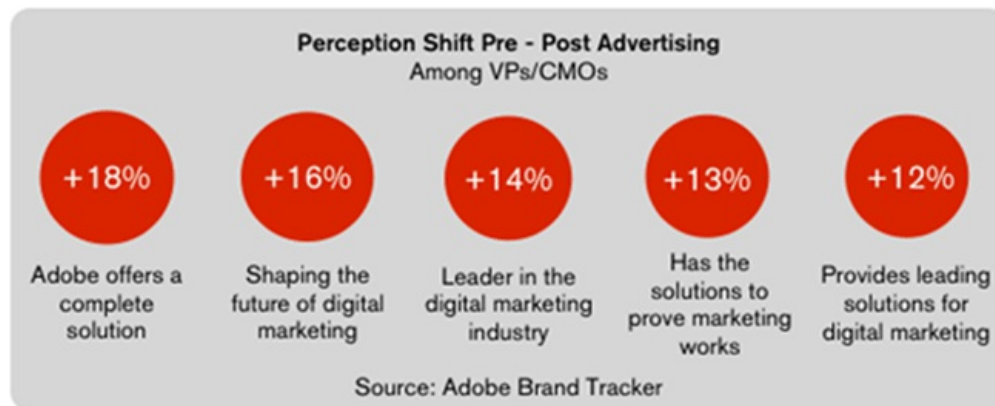
But either way, the creative work was beginning to generate talk within the commentariat.

**Campaign engagement:** as we hoped, the campaign proved to be highly engaging and captured **203 million views**. To put this in perspective, this amount is double that of the people that tuned into the Super Bowl this year. (Source: Adobe Analytics, Nielsen)

Facebook and Twitter engagement increased 148% during the campaign. (Source: Adobe Analytics)

And all this resulted in an increase in aided brand awareness of Adobe Marketing Cloud solution of 24%. (Source: Adobe Brand Tracker 2013)

**Elevating perceptions:** as hoped, the campaign moved the needle on all five of the core KPI measurements pre/post campaign:



**Interest, inquiries and sales:** more significantly than any other measures, pre/post tracking and website visits show that the campaign significantly increased interest and inquiries among senior marketers pre/post campaign.



Most important of all, sales met or exceeded the goal of +20% versus year prior across all five quarters

Having been outspent 16:1 and never exceeding a monthly media budget of \$3.5 million, the "Metrics, Not Myths" campaign effectively cut the BS to deliver a new, surprising and welcome level of empathy to the harassed marketer. The campaign broke new ground for the category and effectively began the repositioning of Adobe from a company that "makes" to one that "makes and measures."

## Other contributing factors

To coincide with the launch of the campaign, Adobe released a research report detailing "the state of marketing" to reinforce the notion of how much BS is in marketing today. (Source: Adobe and Edelman PR 2013)

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