

Windows Phone: Don't Fight. Switch

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This case study describes an advertising strategy in the US, UK and other markets by Windows Phone, the challenger smartphone brand, which sought to persuade consumers to switch by emphasising technology.

- The smartphone market is dominated by phones with iOS and Android phones, with users loyal to their existing operating system.
- Research was used to test several ad concepts, finding that a humorous parody of zealotry surrounding competitor's smartphones that wasn't too technical was most effective.
- The resulting ads were the most recalled Windows Phone ads so far, outperforming competitors and generating social buzz.

Campaign details

Agency: Crispin (CPB)

Media: SMG

Research: PSB, Hall & Partners, Nielsen

Summary

Smartphone advertising is a cluttered space with both mobile operators and device brands clamoring for attention. Among device brands, Samsung and iPhone are dominant. *Smartphone ownership* has been largely a two-horse race: over 90% of smartphone users have either iOS or Android OS devices. Considering this market environment, Windows Phone faced an uphill battle to get noticed, much less gain market share.

From market research, we could see that both new smartphone buyers and those willing to switch platforms were worthy targets. Existing smartphone owners are most influenced by their own experience, while those new to smartphones are heavily influenced by what their friends and family own, so market share was experiencing no catalyst for change. Qualitative research showed that, while Windows Phone was interesting, current

smartphone owners were perfectly happy with their current devices. They would need something specific and compelling to even consider something new. Disruption would be key. Attitudinal analysis showed that those most open to switching were also those most swayed by compelling/innovative new technologies, so that was our entry point.

This research laid the groundwork for a 180 degree switch in the advertising strategy: a competitively-focused campaign, placing Windows Phone in the conversation.

Business objective

In order to drive sales of Windows Phones, the objective of the campaign was to disrupt the default choice between Samsung's Galaxy and iPhone—to get Windows Phone into the smartphone conversation. Windows Phone, in partnership with the Nokia flagship device, was positioned as a viable third alternative. Disrupt, and then sell in the alternative.

Research insights and recommendations.

Research showed that the strategy must be multi-pronged: Windows Phone must first get noticed, must knock the halo off of the competition, must provide a compelling reason to consider switching, and must direct consumers to a specific device.

Concept Development: What is the right way to attack the competition without alienating the 90% of the audience currently using competitive products? That was the task assigned to research. Seven concepts were tested, each taking a different approach and competitive tone. Research showed:

- The Android/iPhone zealotry is well-known and widely considered irrational and silly. It was a cultural phenomenon that was ripe for parody.
- Don't get too technical in feature comparisons as it distracts from the parody and puts people on the defensive.
- When taking a swipe at the competitive shortcomings, make sure those shortcomings are widely acknowledged as such (e.g. Apple maps, Siri frustrations, huge/unwieldy Androids). To do otherwise confuses and distracts from the parody.
- Don't be too serious. Appeal to the audiences' sense of humor in order to poke fun without offending.
- Find settings that help tell the story and provide the tension for the comedy to work.

Ad Testing: Based on findings from concept development, two ads were put into production *Wedding and Recital*. To determine their likelihood to break through against competitive advertising they were tested against the best Samsung Galaxy and iPhone spots (based on Nielsen data).

Multiple edits of the Windows Phone Ads were tested to determine relative breakthrough, brand recall, message recall, and ability to drive purchase consideration. Finding from pretesting led to the final two ads that ran in market.

Media: Nielsen monitoring and market mix modeling were used to recommend both the number of spots to run, and the appropriate media weight levels need to support them. Previously low weight behind multiple executions made it difficult to break through in the fiercely competitive market. This strategy resulted in much higher in-market breakthrough in the forms of Nielsen's General and Brand Recall. For the first time, Windows Phone

advertising performed better than competitive advertising on these two metrics.

Advertising and business results

The "Don't Fight. Switch" Campaign launched April 29th, 2012.

Wedding and *Recital* have been the most recalled Windows Phone ads to date. They outperformed competition, generated social buzz, and have been recognized in advertising trade publications.

Two weeks after the Wedding ad launched, there was a 60% increase in Windows Phone activations.

Once *Wedding* launched, early Nielsen In-Market Tracking & globally-scaled Pretesting allowed rapid campaign expansion. The continued success of *Recital* in the US drove the decision to test in the UK, Germany, France, Mexico, and Brazil. As a result, *Recital* launched internationally in the UK, Germany, France, Mexico, Brazil and Spain.

The focus on camera technology of Nokia's hero device has had a halo effect on all Nokia devices and is commonly listed as a key reason for Nokia Lumia purchase.

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