

The Weather Company Announces Watson Ads, To Humanize The Ad Experience for Consumers with Industry-First Capability
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NEW YORK, June 2, 2016 /PRNewswire/ -- [The Weather Company](#), an IBM Business (NYSE: [IBM](#)) (Weather), is announcing Watson Ads, an industry-first capability in which consumers will be able to interact with IBM Watson through advertising, by being able to ask questions via voice or text and receive relevant information about the product or offering.

Marketers have long sought an advertising solution that can create a one-to-one connection with the consumer, that can be personal, relevant and valuable; and can scale across millions of interactions and touchpoints. Watson Ads will help marketers achieve those goals, and can also help them uncover consumer and product insights faster than ever before, revealing connections previously invisible to human data scientists. This will be the first consumer use of IBM Watson technology for advertising purposes.

IBM Watson can understand natural language, reason, learn and interact with humans. Leveraging Watson technology, Watson Ads will help marketers outthink their current strategies by harnessing the power of cognition and the learnings to:

- Better understand brand perception and favorability
- Help consumers make more informed decisions at point of consideration
- Improve the customer experience
- Aid product information
- Inform and optimize creative strategies
- Help marketers use data more effectively

"The dawn of cognitive advertising is truly a watershed moment. Now as part of IBM, we have even more tools and technologies at our disposal to inspire innovations within advertising, artificial intelligence and storytelling," said Domenic Venuto, general manager, consumer products, The Weather Company. "This is a huge opportunity to expose consumers to all of the surprising and delightful experiences that Watson has in store for them - and to make advertising a truly valuable interaction for both our fans and our marketing partners, which is always our goal."

Campbell Soup Company, Unilever and GSK Consumer Healthcare will be the first marketers to collaborate with The Weather Company on Watson Ads. GroupM's MEC and Mindshare, serving as Campbell's and Unilever's media agencies of record, drove the data strategy and discussions around this collaboration. GSK Consumer Healthcare was brought on by PHD.

WATSON ADS: THE CONSUMER EXPERIENCE

The goal is to delight consumers with a fun, surprising or informative experience based on the campaign's purpose, but with true contextual relevance for the individual user. When viewing a Watson Ad, a consumer will be able to ask Watson questions via voice or text about the product or offering, and Watson's machine learning and natural language capabilities will allow it to provide accurate responses.

For example, one might ask by voice interaction, "What can I make for dinner tonight?" Based on its machine learning and reasoning ability from the data it has ingested, Watson can sort through ingredient and flavor profiles to make recommendations based on the weather, time of day, location and even ingredients users have on hand – all surfaced via dynamic ads. Further, IBM Watson's ability to process and create context from large amounts of unstructured data will help marketers provide consumers with meaningful, true brand and product engagement. In this example, creating recipes on the fly from ingredients consumers already have on hand. Watson Ads benefits from the world's most accurate weather data provided by The Weather Company, which will be factored into query responses. Whether that be historical data, current conditions like temperature, precipitation or the current weather forecast, maximum relevance can be created for each individual consumer - in turn helping them make decisions quickly and directly in the ad unit without leaving the experience.

COGNITIVE ADVERTISING: THE NEXT FRONTIER IN MARKETING

"Transforming ourselves and industries is part of The Weather Company DNA," said Jeremy Steinberg, global head of sales, The Weather Company. "We've embraced big data and leveraged it to improve every aspect of our business, from forecast accuracy to ad targeting. Now we've set our sights on cognition. We believe human interaction is the new 'search,' and that cognitive advertising is the next frontier in marketing – and we're leading the charge to make it a reality."

To advance the industry, The Weather Company intends to create the Watson Ads Council, in which the company will work closely with a team of marketers who will act as a sounding board for the latest innovations leveraging Watson Ads and cognitive advancements in advertising. As the first brand marketers signed on for Watson Ads, Campbell Soup Company, Unilever and GSK Consumer Healthcare all plan to participate in the Watson Ads Council.

"Our members will help us learn how to best leverage cognitive computing, machine learning, and natural language generation and processing. They'll help us drive the industry and lead the direction for how cognition can improve advertising," said Steinberg.

"While in this increasingly cluttered world it is getting harder and harder to breakthrough and engage people, technology is helping to find ways to connect with more relevant content," said Keith Weed, chief marketing and communications officer, Unilever. "This will help us to create better, more engaging content that matches our consumers' interests and unique preferences."

"We often talk about the holy grail of advertising being 'the right content delivered through the right medium at the right time.' Watson Ads leverages cognitive computer intelligence to triangulate on all three of those simultaneously based on its understanding of human behavior," said Adam Gerhart, US CEO, Mindshare. "We're entering an era of not just computer intelligence but simulated human intelligence that evolves the typical Ad experience and brings our vision of Adaptive Marketing to life."

"We are excited that consumers will be able to engage directly with Chef Watson for meal ideas," said Marci Raible, director of global media and marketing services at Campbell Soup Company. "Chef Watson will take into account a person's local weather, time of day and location as well as ingredients they have on hand to offer tried and tested recipes from Campbell's Kitchen. Using the data to offer quick and easy meal solutions in real time is exactly the experience we are looking to drive with consumers."

"We are optimistic of Watson technology's ability in driving forward the future of marketing and are thrilled to have Campbell's and The Weather Company lead this transformation," said Carl Fremont, global chief digital officer, MEC. "For the first time, we are enabling consumers to interact directly with Campbell's weather-triggered desktop and mobile ads through the use of voice and text commands. This one to one human-like interaction will offer valuable insights on consumer behavior as well as ingredient trends to further optimize our client's future marketing campaigns."

"Cognition humanizes the use of data as we move from intent-based advertising to actual one-to-one interacting. It also gives consumers easy access to information to make better decisions about their healthcare in real time," said Theresa Agnew, chief marketing officer, GSK Consumer Healthcare. "We have produced a number of successful campaigns with Weather and value their steadfast commitment to creating a quality advertising and consumer engagement experience for their fans."

"We are always looking for innovative ways to help brands connect with their audience, and this is truly unlike any ad experience we've seen before," said Craig Atkinson, chief investment officer, PHD USA. "We believe these represent the first steps towards a new era in cognitive advertising, and we're excited to not only see what the future holds, but be part of crafting it."

Watson Ads will launch first exclusively across The Weather Company properties, but this is expected to have broad implications for other marketing channels, including out of home, television, connected cars, social media platforms and more.

The Weather Company, an IBM Business

The Weather Company, an IBM Business, is the world's largest private weather enterprise, helping people make informed decisions – and take action – in the face of weather. The company offers the most accurate,

personalized and actionable weather data and insights to millions of consumers and thousands of businesses via Weather's API, its business solutions division, and its own digital products from The Weather Channel (weather.com) and Weather Underground (wunderground.com). The company delivers up to 26 billion forecasts daily for 2.2 billion locations.

Weather's portfolio includes [award-winning products](#) such as the fourth most-downloaded app and a top weather app on all major mobile platforms globally; the world's largest network of personal weather stations; a top-20 U.S. website; the seventh most data-rich site in the world; one of the world's largest IoT data platforms; and industry-leading business solutions.

Weather Means Business™. The world's biggest brands in aviation, energy, insurance, media, and government rely on The Weather Company for data, technology platforms and services to help improve decision-making and respond to weather's impact on business. For more, visit www.theweathercompany.com.

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Contact:

Maureen Marshall
VP, Communications
The Weather Company, an IBM Business
maureen.marshall@weather.com

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