

## CASE STUDY: Telstra BigPond

# 'Rabbits'



Telstra BigPond is a market leader in the communications category yet it took a 'challenger' approach to its marketing of broadband. By taking an emotionally-led approach to advertising messaging, BigPond completely disrupted category conventions.

### Background

Prior to the 'Rabbits' campaign, Telstra BigPond was faced with a range of competitor Internet Service Providers (ISP's) promoting themselves on two attributes: speed and price. An analysis of category research indicated that this retail approach of 'who can shout their price loudest' was resulting in some less than desirable outcomes for all players.

Firstly it educated consumers to buy on price. Secondly, it instilled scepticism about any discernible difference between ISP's, and thirdly, by not explaining how broadband would benefit their lives, consumers were confused and unwilling to 'hurry onto broadband'.

### Challenges

Given the commoditised state of the market and Telstra BigPond's premium pricing, it was hardly surprising that BigPond's market share was declining, while discount-oriented competitors were growing their share.

BigPond needed to elevate itself above the 'retail rut' by finding a meaningful way to differentiate itself. It also needed to overcome the continual negative publicity surrounding BigPond's parent brand Telstra, due to the flagging share price of T2.

### Objective

BigPond's objective was to arrest market share decline; specifically, to raise its share from 39.7 per cent to 41.5 per cent over the 12 month campaign period (1 September 2005 to 31 August 2006).

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## Target & Insights

Quantitative and qualitative research provided important insights.

The quantitative research helped refine the target market to middle income families with young kids (and to a lesser extent, affluent families). This group were 'happy with their dial up service' and not at all convinced of the need to get broadband - let alone which ISP was best for them.

Qualitative research explored what was beneath the target market's inertia. BigPond's advertising agency, BWM, conducted a series of focus groups in which it discovered that the only time discussion of broadband became emotionally charged was when discussing the idea that it might help kids get their homework done quicker. Parents and kids found common ground to stand on in relation to the intended use of broadband.

It became clear that there was a deeper emotional context underpinning the subject of a child's education; that is parents feel education is the backbone to the level of future success of their children.

## The Solution

Contextualising this insight with the knowledge that one in four households had broadband, led to the emotionally charged proposition for the campaign: 'BigPond broadband is essential for your kids to have a fair go at school.'

BigPond's brand character was refined to personify a down to earth and approachable Australian that everyone can relate to.

The campaign launched with a 45 second TVC, in which Dad explains to a questioning young son that the Great Wall of China was built to 'keep the rabbits out'. The execution illustrated the central proposition in an entertaining manner and the non-preachy, charming and humorous tone was critical in establishing BigPond's unique identity.

Importantly, having established why people should get broadband, the campaign followed through with simple offers for people to action the idea, ie; 'with broadband from just \$14.97 per month you can afford to give your kids the right answers'.

Television formed the cornerstone of the campaign, incorporating the initial launch 45 second TVC and an offer-led 30 second execution to drive response.

Rather than simply using one key visual from the TVC across all mediums, it was the central idea of the TVC - 'Give your kids the right answers, get them broadband' - that was translated into press inserts and online executions.

## The Role of Free TV

BWM Executive Creative Director, Rob Belgiovane said TV was the hero of the campaign.

"The whole concept worked as well as it did because of television's great ability to tell a story succinctly and with emotion and humour. It's simply not the kind of idea that could have worked in print or online alone," he said.

"The other important factor in choosing television as the core of the campaign was that it enabled us to get the idea out to our target market quickly."

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## Results

The 'Rabbits' campaign delivered a massive step change in both the business and brand metrics during the campaign period.

- BigPond's call volumes spiked immediately following the campaign launch and were sustained throughout the campaign period.
- The campaign delivered a Return On Marketing Investment of \$82 for every \$1 spent in media. It also resulted in a 34 per cent decrease in the cost per acquisition.
- Telstra BigPond's market share increased during the campaign period by two full percentage points.
- 'Rabbits' exceeded advertising tracking expectations with 94 per cent ad recognition for the campaign period.

These results are considerable when one considers the category growth rate actually decreased by 25 per cent while the campaign was on air.

The campaign is a testament to the power of quality insight, a good idea, and indeed the power of television itself in generating brand fame and delivering tangible sales results.

The TVC entered the public's consciousness with the phrase "to keep the rabbits out" becoming a favourite way to answer the unknowable and has been voted by consumers as Australia's Favourite Ad.

## Who

Client: Telstra Big Pond  
Creative agency: BWM