

Simply, Better
Making real time
the right time

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With its ability to deliver content and drive engagement around unfolding events, real time marketing offers seemingly endless creative possibilities along with the intoxicating lure of immediate results. But we believe the focus on real time may be in danger of missing the point.

The primary objective of brands should be to reach people at the right time, in the moments that really matter: the right content at the right point on the purchase journey. Real time marketing can play an important role but should be seen as a tactic, not *the* tactic to deliver relevant content to people at the moments of greatest need and influence.

The real time promise

Today's media environment is always on. Mobile devices keep us constantly connected and give brands more ability than ever before to advertise, engage and entice consumers throughout their day.

Despite the ability of digital to target people more precisely than ever before, much of this activity remains traditional push marketing with brands fighting for attention and space in newsfeeds or display ads trying to draw people away from the content they've chosen to consume.

The promise of real time is to avoid these pitfalls by providing content that's more relevant, timely and personalised to the needs and interests of the individual. It's hoped that this approach will bring greater engagement and attention and build stronger brand relationships than other approaches.



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Real time marketing takes many forms

Oreo's 'You can still dunk in the dark' Super Bowl tweet is often cited as a classic example of real time marketing. But engaging with live events is just one tactic and real time comes in many forms.

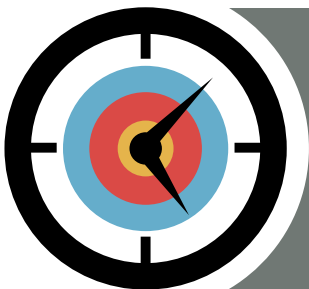
#1

Marketing around trending topics and events

Oreo's tweet occurred during the Super Bowl two years ago when play was interrupted after the floodlights failed in the stadium. During the pause in the action, Oreo's social media team created and tweeted the "Power out? No problem. You can still dunk in the dark" tweet that generated over 15,000 retweets and 6,000 favourites.

This type of approach is now commonplace with brands regularly posting content about live events and trending news stories. Apple's recent iPhone 6 'bendgate' problems were roundly seized upon by numerous brands and not only by mocking competitors. Kit Kat's 'We don't bend, we #break' tweet achieved 25,000 retweets within days.

It's easy to see the appeal of this approach, where brands engage in a topic that people are already interested in and talking about because, if done well, the brand becomes the content that people are discussing.



#2

Real time customer engagement

Engaging with customers on social media is another real time approach. This includes dealing with direct enquiries or customer issues and passively monitoring social activity for signs of problems or people in need of support.

This is where tone of voice is key. Not only to deal with the customer in a way that pleases them, but also in a way that feels natural for the brand and being aware that any mis-steps have the potential to go viral.

#3

Optimising ad campaigns on the fly

It's a standard approach to launch multiple versions of online ads and identify which aspects drive the greatest response. Known as A/B testing, this involves making small tweaks to advertising creative and then identifying the most effective ads and moving support to those.

#4

Programmatic or real time bidding for online ads

Real time bidding also falls under the definition of real time marketing, though the meaning of real time in this sense is more to do with the fact that online ad inventory is bid for in a 'live auction'. Advertisers choose their desired target audience and the program attempts to match their request and serve their ads accordingly. For example, an airline may wish to target round the world flights to gap year students so might program a bid to serve ads on travel websites visited by high proportions of under 25s. Again, the goal is to serve more relevant content to people at the right time in their purchase journey.

Data provides the opportunity for greater creativity & innovation

In all these cases, the common factor is data: trending topics and events, search queries, social media, web analytics, behavioural feedback and user or customer demographics.

So if we were to define what real time marketing is and should be, it would be this: *real time marketing uses data to reach people with relevant content at the right moment.* Such as these examples from Kleenex and Lurpak:

Kleenex

Location data to advertise in flu hot spots

During the flu season, Kleenex used Google search query data to identify hotspots in the UK where people were searching for flu remedies. They then served 96% of their online ads only to those localities and regions that were experiencing outbreaks. They estimated that the campaign returned a 46% year-on-year sales increase, which equated to an extra 430,000 boxes sold.

Lurpak

National 'mood' data to advertise comfort food at the right moment

Lurpak used news, weather and social data to run a campaign that was based around the insight that people turn to comfort food in moments when they need cheering up. They created a national 'Spirit Level' that used data to gauge the nation's mood and to run digital activity only when feelings were likely to be low. They estimate the approach returned a 9% increase in sales and saved over £1m in media efficiency.

Why right time is more important than real time

We believe data driven real time approaches that stay true to the role the brand plays in people's lives (like the previous examples) are most likely to deliver brand impacts in the short and long term, rather than approaches that simply try to piggy back on trending stories and live events. Why?

■ **Beware 'the new clutter'**

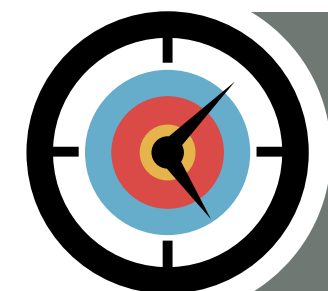
Whether it be iPhone #bendgate, a new Royal baby or the World Cup, it's not long before a flood of brands start publishing content when any major event unfolds. Just as clicking on a banner is no longer a novelty, neither is seeing brands marketing around live events. Real time can contribute to clutter too. Brands that crowbar themselves into events with which they have no obvious relevance only risk adding to this.

■ **'Planned spontaneity' is difficult to achieve**

Creating content around unfolding events has a role but is tough to execute both creatively and organisationally. In reference to the 2013 Super Bowl tweet, Laura Henderson of Mondelez has been quoted as saying "I think we underplay how difficult that was to do. That was a team of people in a war room situation, outside of normal working hours, with legal on call. It's a lot to organise. And it's a really, really tricky thing to operationalise over time."

■ **Creating social content is not cost free**

To understand the value of this approach, the cost to the organisation of facilitating it and the people and time involved, must be weighed up against the numbers of retweets and favourites and how this translates into reach and frequency compared with paid campaigns.



How can research help?

The challenge for research is also to reach people at the right time and at Ipsos ASI we're using innovative approaches to measure the impact of data driven real time campaigns:

Birds Eye

Serving online ads to people when they were hungry

Our client, Birds Eye, recently ran a campaign in which they served online ads to people between 5pm-11pm when they were most likely to be hungry and in the mood for a fish finger sandwich.



We used mobile to survey people between these times and asked respondents whether they were hungry or not. The hypothesis that reaching people in the right need state is more likely to lead to activation was confirmed by the finding that 33% of hungry people who were exposed to the ad said they wanted to "eat fish fingers right now" compared with just 12% of those who were not hungry.

The campaign also drove brand effects: 43% of hungry people who saw the ad said they'd buy Birds Eye fish fingers next time they shopped, compared with 33% of hungry people who didn't see it.

The campaign also showed the potential for long term impact as well as immediate activation: among people who were not hungry, 17% of those who saw the ad said that they would eat fish fingers more often compared with 6% who were not exposed to the ad.

Innovative marketing requires innovative research

We're also using mobile to enable consumers to tell us about brand experiences as they happen, so we can measure the impact of advertising, word of mouth and point of sale and get closer to the moment of truth.

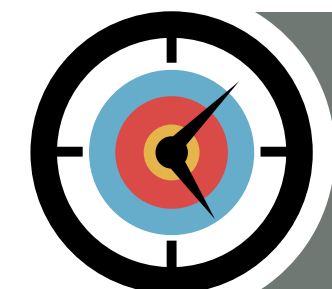
Ipsos ASI also offers an approach where we replace the online ads our panellists see with our clients' ads, while they naturally browse the web – not in a research environment. This means we can test ads in their natural state, in real time, and offer optimisation based on brand impact.

This is vital for online ads that are intended to have long term, brand building and equity impacts, rather than simply drive a direct response.

Creativity is what really drives effective communications

Ultimately, great creative is what drives marketing effectiveness. If your creative, in whatever form, is good enough, then it will stand out from the clutter and engage people.

So for us, the key to making real time and all forms of marketing a success is to develop creative big ideas that are true to the brand and founded on insights that resonate and inspire - and to use data driven approaches to ensure that these are executed and delivered at the right time.



At Ipsos ASI UK, we believe advertising and communications research should be fertiliser, not weedkiller, and a force for empowering creativity and building stronger brands.

Using iterative, flexible approaches, we empower our clients to find a big idea that's universal, and founded on human motivations.

We help brands to develop strategies that grow their business by using forward-looking measures of brand relationships that link to real-world behaviour – measures that are simple and intuitive and reflect that brands are heuristics for decision making.

Using neuroscientific techniques, such as Facial Coding and Biometrics, we enable our clients to understand and strengthen the emotional response to their advertising. We derive the impact of advertising on the brand – not by asking people how it affects them - and by revealing underlying and subconscious brand perceptions through Implicit Reaction Time (IRT) tests.

We help brands make campaigns that become famous by evaluating the potential of their activity to achieve virality through measures that reflect online and offline sharing behaviours, and using online ad replacement to test campaigns in the real world, in real time.

Ultimately, we believe that simplicity of purpose, communications and service is just as important to great research as it is to building great brands.

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