



ISSUE 3 FINANCIAL SERVICES EDITION

FROM BARACK TO BITCOIN: JAMIE SMITH'S LEAP OF FAITH INTO THE FUTURE

page 3



METRICS THAT MATTER: 2017 BRANDED CONTENT BENCHMARKS REPORT HOW TO DECIDE IF YOUR BRAND SHOULD SPONSOR CONTENT

A NOTE FROM PRESSBOARD

In his new memoir on the craft of writing, the great horror storyteller Stephen King proclaims that, "the best stories always end up being about the people rather than the event, which is to say character-driven." He makes an incredibly profound point, and the lesson applies to almost all branded content, including the very magazine you're reading now. When we set out to create a new issue of *The Science of Storytelling* and focus on the financial services industry, we knew right away that it was the characters within the industry who we wanted to shine a light on, rather than the industry itself. It's their stories, dreams and insights that make them true thought leaders, and make this issue worth reading for any marketing or advertising professional. I'm incredibly grateful to have had the opportunity to sit down with three incredible women in marketing and communications whose work spans from credit cards and banking to the White House and Bitcoin. I hope you find their shared wisdom as valuable as I did.

JERRID GRIMM CO-FOUNDER, PRESSB



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SPECIAL THANKS TO

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FROM BARACK TO BITCOIN: JAMIE SMITH'S LEAP OF FAITH INTO THE FUTURE

The conversation surrounding the blockchain and Bitcoin has exploded in recent months.

BY SHAWN RAGELL MARKETING MANAGER, PRESSBOARD

Thanks to Bitcoin's record-breaking rise in 2017, more people than ever are intrigued by the world of cryptocurrencies. But the technology that's set to revolutionize the business and financial industries still lurks just outside of the mainstream, seen largely as intangible and confusing just another digital fad that's sure to fade.

Jamie Smith, the Chief Communications Officer at Bitfury, one of the leading blockchain infrastructure providers, says that if businesses aren't currently figuring out how they can get on board with Bitcoin, they're already getting left behind.



"Right now is the moment to harness this technology for your bottom line," Smith says over the phone from Washington. "There's no reason to be afraid of it."

Smith's career in crypto seems unlikely given her pedigree: most recently she served as Executive Vice President at Edelman Public Relations, and before that she served as Special Assistant and Spokesperson for President Obama and Deputy White House Press Secretary. She says that after doing months of her own research on the services, she knew this was the industry she wanted to be a part of, and feels that others' "a-ha" moments aren't far behind.

In many ways, Smith represents the rare relatable voice in a conversation that's often led by the tech and engineering worlds. While she jokes that it was an "insane decision" to make the leap to Bitfury, the opportunities Smith saw in matters of security, identity and equality in Bitcoin's future were too inspiring to pass up.

"Most people in this world just want to provide for their families and keep them safe, and create a nest egg for the people they love," she says. "And if you have a technology that allows for those three things to happen, chances are it's going to be pretty successful."

We chatted with Smith about her leap of digital faith, the limitless crypto future and why and how marketers need to embrace this change.

You've had a remarkable career trajectory. Most recently you were in a senior leadership position at Edelman, and before that you were the Deputy White House Press Security and Special Assistant to President Obama. You're unique in that you left those worlds behind to join a major player in the Bitcoin industry. Could you walk us through that decision?

I was very happy living my post-government, White House job life. I was sitting at home with my beautiful 10-day-old baby boy, my second child, and this guy that I worked with at the White House called me and he said, "Hey, I think you should totally leave your super safe job with two small children and join this crazy start-up with a bunch of people you've never met." And I was like, "Are you out of your mind? That is criminal money, and I want nothing to do with it, and you're crazy." And he said, "Well, that's the problem, is that that's what people think, and we really need to change that narrative."

Not to say that when you are with a new baby that you have time on your hands, but you do have time to read. And I was so compelled by what I was reading. It wasn't that I wasn't aware of Bitcoin coming on the rise, I just didn't understand the potential of it and what it actually meant, and I certainly did not understand blockchain technology at all. About three months after I started [researching], I was convinced that this was what I was going to do.

What I've found is that people go through one of three doors as they are navigating this. One, they either really, really care about the security and the data integrity, which was me. Two, they really care about the finance part, like straight-up money movement, which is frankly not me.

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I care about it more from a different opportunity standpoint, and ensuring people can access more capital, and frankly just start a business and provide for their families.

But what really put me over the edge, and I think this is sort of the third door, is the [opportunity] beyond finances. What can this technology do to take people to a whole other level of imagination? Whether it's electronic health records, or identity, or music, or movies or really anything. So that was really cool and exciting to explore, and to really try and wrap my head around. It's been off to the races ever since. It's a wild, exciting, crazy ride. The hardest part of this whole industry is keeping up with it. It changes so quickly that it's actually sort of mind numbing just how fast this happens, and how magnetic it all is and how many people are getting involved so, so, so fast.

One thing that marketers in the financial services industry face is the difficult task of communicating really complicated products to customers. How do you personally explain Bitcoin to people you know in your life?

I start in a security place. When people created the internet, it was to move information, and it changed the world. But that information had to be stored somewhere. And so what they did is they rightly stored it in silos and put it in databases. But those databases have proven to be relatively hackable.

So a bunch of geniuses came up with the concept of taking all the data in a silo and breaking it up into millions and billions of pieces and putting them around the world so that if you wanted to break into it, you have to actually break into all of those pieces as opposed to just one.

And so you sort of start there and people are like, "Okay that makes sense, that makes sense. So how does it work, and what is blockchain, and what is Bitcoin, or what's a cryptocurrency?"

And the way that I describe that is that there are two people wanting to exchange value,



Bitfury Data Center via Bitcoinist

right? You call me and say I need a thousand dollars, and I say okay, I'll send it to you. So you have a wallet on your phone, and I have a wallet on my phone. And I send you a thousand dollars, and I sent it along these rails. Think of it like a train track. I've attached that asset to a digital token, and that token just went across the blockchain. So think of the blockchain as the train track, the car on top of the blockchain is a digital token, and that digital token is called a bitcoin. So really a bitcoin is just a vehicle to allow you and I to send each other value in the most secure way possible on Earth right now.

What people are doing in the FinTech space is moving money. But what so many industries are discovering is it's just an asset. It doesn't have to be money. It can be anything. It could be your vote, it could be a piece of music, it could be a piece of artwork, it could be a diamond. Walmart is using it to track wheat that comes in and out of the country with the country of origin act. The possibilities are literally limitless once you really let yourself think about, "Okay, this is how this works."

If I had a baby, I want to stamp the fact that that baby exists and put a permanent record into this blockchain system that that baby is a really person. And so I've established their identity and I timestamp it onto the Bitcoin blockchain, and now they have a number that says, "This is me. And I grew up, and you can't erase it. Can't go in there, can't change it."

You mentioned that you needed to help change the narrative around the technology from criminal to worldchanging. Where do you think the public currently is on that spectrum?

My focus is much more on the B2B, or B2I, as opposed to the B2C. I don't think we're totally B2C yet as an industry. Most people have never even heard of it. Which is good. There's a huge opportunity there from a marketing and communications standpoint.

From the World Economic Forum standpoint — I co-chair their blockchain council with former President Ilves of Estonia — last year there were probably 20 different discussions going on about blockchain and cryptocurrencies. So that's a lot in the early, early years.

And frankly, I'll tell you why I think that's the case. I would argue that somewhere in the range of 60-70% of the world's population is just frankly living under really broken systems. And everybody from your policy maker, to a business leader, to whatever is just looking for solutions. Something new.

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A new tool in our toolbox that could be utilized to fix some things that just aren't delivering for people. And like it or not, blockchain and cryptocurrency are it, and they're here to stay.

You either can ignore that, or you have to find some way to embrace it and figure out how you can use it to advance the world to the next level. So I think that's why there's such an outpouring about this.

One of the reasons I'm so excited about blockchain technology is the future potential to unlock not just capital, but unlock power in the rest of the world, especially in underdeveloped nations.

I think it is important for your audience to understand there are two tracks working at the same time. There is the developed-world conversation, and the developing-world conversation. And those are actually pretty different. And unfortunately, I think it's a sign that we're not so advanced because the two have not completely met yet. But they will really soon. Most people that I talk to who are sort of part of the original internet feel like it's like 1993, but it's moving so much faster than in the 90's. Because as hard as it is to explain blockchain technology, it's not anywhere near as hard as it was to explain the internet.

You mentioned that business leaders and people in that space should be thinking about how they can take advantage of the blockchain, and what applications they need to start implementing. How do you think the average business can prepare an organization for that?

I would go so far as to say that if your company is not at least in the planning stages, it's bordering on malpractice. Almost every company out there is doing something to explore how this technology can be used as a tool. I think at a certain point, maybe from a security perspective, people will say, "Is my information being protected using blockchain technology?" But if you are a business leader, your job is exploring how this can keep data more secure.

Bitcoin and blockchain have been around for almost 10 years, and no one's been able to hack it, and that is unheard of. There are tons of discussions about why a bitcoin is worth so much. Surely there's market speculation

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and all the other things going on, but what a bitcoin represents is data, and data integrity and being able store a great deal of data in a virtually un-hackable-so-far way, which is pretty valuable.

In advertising right now, everyone's dealing with ad-fraud issues and trying to figure out a way to solve that. Is the potential there to be able to apply this tech to ad impressions, clicks and other digital activities to remove that problem?

From an ad perspective, I just can't imagine a world where marketing companies and advertisements aren't using this technology to sort of log all the comings and goings of all the ads and having that be the back end. Also, at some point, I would be very willing and happy to pay for certain ads in micropayments, or to pay for content through stories. If the New York Times wants to charge me 35 cents for one story, and five cents for another story, and \$2 for a long-form story, I would do that. It may be able to inject a whole new level of money into various systems that you couldn't harness before.

That's a great point. Media companies are looking for these new revenue sources.

I come from politics and government, but I think the two things that make the world go round, overall, are security and money. And the thing that is compelling about this technology to me is that it's more secure than anything we know right now, and it's so much cheaper. And that's what truly got me over the edge and made me jump off this cliff. The simple reality that there will be global WiFi, almost everyone in the world will have a smartphone and now you have a system where people can securely move assets around the world for almost free. Of course people are going to use it.

With everything that's happened in 2017, I feel like I would be remiss not to ask and draw some insights from your time in politics. I was wondering what you think about being in the "post-truth" era? And with the rising public distrust of institutions like government and media, how can brands reinforce that trust with the public?

This is not a scientific assessment. I haven't seen the market research, but I do live on Earth, and I feel like I'm seeing the world from frankly just a different perspective not being so engaged in the political side, but still being ever-passionate about it. I think what we saw — and especially in Edelman's Trust Barometer, which is really, incredible research they've been doing for years — is that for the last five, six, seven years, the research has really been clear that you have to show the world that you stand for something. It is no longer okay to say, "we sell vacuum cleaners, and that's what we do." People want to know why you sell vacuum cleaners, what kind of world do you want to create and why does that matter? Whatever it is, you've got to stand for something. And people, consumers especially, younger consumers, really care about that.

Now it's like, do you really stand for that? Show me. Prove it to me. I think Patagonia is a great example. Taking a stand on Bears Ears. I think that sort of sincerity is becoming even more important as people are evaluating the difference between truth and lies.

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BMO USES BRANDED **CONTENT TO GIVE AWAY A YEAR OF MORTGAGE-**FREE LIVING



THE CHALLENGE

BMO, one of Canada's major banks, wanted to raise awareness of a new contest that was giving away a year of mortgage-free living. The contest needed to generate excitement and educate the target demographic of young families and singles, ages 27-35, that were considering buying their first home or upgrading to a larger home.

OUR SOLUTION

BMO used Pressboard's platform to create branded content with five influential English and French media publications. The content was tracked and measured through the Pressboard platform and published natively on each publisher's website. Each piece highlighted the nuances of buying a home and reinforced BMO's core message: "We're here to help." The branded content generated contest entries while also advising, educating and helping BMO's audience research their home purchase.



Hottest New Neighbourhoods in Toronto

Sept 16, 2016

Neighbourhood by neighbourhood, Toronto is reinventing itself now more than ever. As our city grows, we're seeing new pockets of exciting residential developments and retail activity taking off. These five Toronto neighbourhoods showcase the best of ..

CAMPAIGN

HIGHLIGHTS

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Campaign overdelivered on its goal, resulting in Imost \$26,000 in free media for BMO.

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udiences spent more

than 1 minute on

average reading and engaging with

each story.

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90% of readers found

the stories via social

media, as friends

shared stories and





5 Things You Should Know About Living That Condo Life in Toronto

Sept 26, 2016 If this is your first foray into the world of real estate, you're probably a little bit wary about the whole deal. Let's be real; unless

you've been through the process before,

you're going to be navigating uncharted ...







TOP 5 des meilleurs quartiers de Montréal

Sept 9, 2016

Déménager, c'est souvent un casse-tête. Quand on y pense, il y a tellement de choix et de décisions à prendre. En plus, ce sont tous des choses à ne pas prendre à la légère ! Choisir un coloc, choisir ta déco..







Always ask 'how is this adding value to your consumer and why would they care?'

LAUREN DINEEN DUARTE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA, AMERICAN EXPRESS CANADA

A LESSON IN INFLUENCER MARKETING WITH AMERICAN EXPRESS

What can you learn from the credit card giant's killer video content strategy?

BY LEAH BJORNSON CONTENT MANAGER, PRESSBOARD



Clip from "The NEW American Express Cobalt" Card - Marcus Stroman - You Do You" on YouTube

"Influencer marketing" has become much more than a buzzword — it's an entire world of tools, methods, conferences and major brand players.

Brands large and small are incorporating influencer content into their marketing strategy. A recent survey found that a whopping 85% of marketers are planning to execute at least one influencer marketing campaign over the next 12 months.

In a predictive Forbes article, titled "Why Influencer Marketing Will Explode In 2017," the writer surmised, "The best influencers work to integrate their branded campaigns into their unique stories without skipping a beat. They know their audiences are fickle and can quickly leave, so they treat each and every post with care."

The same care has to be taken by brands who wade into creating content with social media influencers. Today's viewers are so overwhelmed by the abundance of stories being told on their screens every day, that they are loathe to give any precious screen time to content that doesn't seem worth viewing.

American Express is a brand that showcases deliberation in their approach to partnerships with influencers. Lauren Dineen Duarte, Director of Public Affairs & Communications for American Express Canada, lives and breathes social media, and in her role, she consistently challenges her team to "find new and exciting ways to break through the noise and reach target audiences more effectively and creatively."

PUTTING EMPHASIS ON VIDEO

Duarte and her team have steered American Express towards branded video content, making it an essential part of their overall marketing strategy.

Duarte explains, "We have prioritized video campaigns having worked with a number of notable influencers to create engaging content. Working with bloggers, athletes and recognizable Canadian personalities has allowed us to personalize the stories we tell, reach more people and develop more authentic content."

That search for authenticity in their storytelling has lead American Express to create video series such as "My Travel Style", a YouTube series that asks major social media players like Marcus Troy, Krystin Lee and Adam van Koeverden, questions about their personal travel style like "What's your packing style?" and "What do you bring with you every time you travel?" The responses from the influencers are warm and full of personality; there's a reason they've each amassed such formidable followings.

Another American Express video features a partnership with influencer and Toronto Blue Jays pitcher Marcus Stroman. The camera follows Stroman as he sweeps through a day in Toronto with his trademark effortless cool. "Before moving up here, I'd never been to Canada," Stroman says. "But it wasn't long before I fell in love."

AVOIDING THE PITFALL OF INAUTHENTICITY

Advertisers looking to get into influencer Marketing, beware: it's paramount to work

with influencers as partners rather than treating them as actors that can be molded and fit into your brand's voice.

"It's crucial to understand what's important to them as people and as a business and truly see what their life moments are," says Duarte. "What's more, there must be an appreciation for how your brand can fit into their story and enhance their content in a meaningful and authentic way."

It's clear that, when done right, working with influencers can lead to more honest storytelling. For Duarte, the proof of influencer content marketing is in the metrics.

"In the last year, we have seen tremendous success as a result of our video campaigns," she says. "Not only have we achieved better engagement, we have been able to tie video content to business results, showcasing just how much this type of content resonates with consumers."

GETTING RECEIPTS: WHAT TO MEASURE

 Influencer
 When it comes to metrics, American Express

 Int to work
 uses a flexible approach, tailored to the



When it comes to content that is posted to the influencers' owned channels, "we measure success with organic metrics like comments, views, likes and how it's received by their audience. We essentially want a post that is extremely engaging and encourages and influencer's following to participate in the post," says Duarte.

On American Express' own platforms, they measure based on views and landing page visits, and their ultimate metric is the percentage of viewers they are able to direct towards downstream metrics such as conversions.

No matter your company's story and voice, tapping into an influencer's unique storytelling abilities is an amazing way to create content for your audience that they'll find valuable, relatable and — most importantly — watchable.









Clips from "a" on YouTube.

HOW TO DECIDE IF YOUR BRAND SHOULD SPONSOR CONTENT

A simple framework for marketers to choose between sponsoring a piece of content or publishing it themselves.

BY SHAWN RAGELL MARKETING MANAGER, PRESSBOARD

SHOULD MY BRAND CREATE OR SPONSOR A PIECE OF CONTENT?



We're well into the era of branded content, with more and more brands recognizing that consumers find content more engaging than traditional forms of advertising. New research from the Content Marketing Institute shows that 83% of marketers expect the amount of budget they allocate towards content marketing to remain steady or increase in 2018. But how should they allocate those resources?

Should budgets be spent on creating and publishing content in-house, or moved towards sponsoring content created by media publishers? At Pressboard, we believe that any well-rounded content marketing plan needs to allocate resources to both. Brands need to begin to see themselves as media outlets while also leveraging the expertise of publishers that have spent years mastering the craft.

However, for each individual piece of content or campaign, the question remains: should this be created and published by your brand, or created with a publisher as sponsored content? While there are many circumstances specific to your brand that should factor into that decision, we created this simple decision tree as a framework that every brand can use to help make that decision.

DO I HAVE THE RESOURCES TO CREATE THE CONTENT?

If you have industry experts and brand ambassadors within your team that can speak with authority on topics relevant to your space, consider recruiting them to support your brand's content efforts. It's also important to determine whether your team members can articulate their ideas into a story format. In addition to effective writing, various content creation skills are required to produce and present your stories as a full package, such as photo-sourcing, copy editing and managing the publication and distribution of content. If you currently have these resources in-house, then you should be creating and publishing content for your business. Research shows that 92.34% of companies using inbound marketing increase their traffic. It can be as simple as a company blog or as robust as a scripted video series, but either way, content should be at least one part of your brand's marketing mix if you have the resources to create it in-house.

If you're not confident you have everything you need to fulfill your content objectives, or if you would prefer to focus your time and resources on other business objectives, then you should consider sponsoring content. When you work with a media publisher, you get more than a spot on their website; you get to leverage their content creation expertise. When collaborating, take their advice to heart and consider how you can balance their input with your brand's needs. After all, the publisher wants your content to perform well as much as you do.



DO I HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO SPEAK ON This subject?

By giving your audience reliable knowledge about your industry, you position your brand as a trusted leader in your field. If you already have voices within your organization that can offer helpful and interesting information to your audience, great! You can begin by asking them to write evergreen, SEO-friendly content for your blog, create a Q&A section for your support page, or build case studies and customer experience stories for your website. However, there are many instances where brands can benefit from creating content that falls outside their traditional areas of expertise. A major bank is an authority figure on the topic of financial services, but they might also benefit from creating travel content to promote their new travel rewards card. In this instance, it might be inadvisable for the company to start publishing travel stories on their own blog or YouTube channel, because audiences don't view them as an authority on the subject. This is where a partnership with a media publisher can provide support.

Chase Bank recognized this when they wanted to promote their Southwest Rapid Rewards Card to audiences interested in travel content. They used the Pressboard platform to create sponsored content that relied on Mashable's authority on the subject matter.



DO I HAVE THE AUDIENCE I WANT TO REACH?

Even if you're creating great content in-house, it won't have any effect if it never gets seen. Within the crowded content landscape, companies need to ask themselves the following question for each piece of content or campaign: does your brand reach the audience you wish to target?

If you know your market well and believe you can reach the target audience through your own platforms and properties, then you have a strong case for creating and publishing a piece of content yourself. Since social media and more specifically, Facebook, drives the most traffic to branded content, determine whether the target audience is contained within your brand's Facebook following.

If the audience you want to target is outside of your brand's existing reach, teaming up with the right media publisher is a great way to speak to them. By partnering with a publication, brands can leverage the publisher's established audience to reach more potential customers than ever before. You want to be where your target audience is already consuming content and looking for a solution that you might offer.

When asked why brands should work with media publishers to create sponsored content, Nicola Elliot, Head of Content at BBC StoryWorks, had the following to say:

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My best piece of advice would be to really take the time to listen to what publishers have to say about their audience, and the type of content that works best on their platforms. One of the key advantages that publishers have in this area is their extensive knowledge of and relationship with their readers. This knowledge can help shape your content strategy on their platform to achieve maximum results.

A good example of reaching new audiences through sponsored content comes from Mastercard, who wanted to raise awareness for a contest that was catered to small businesses. They knew they wanted to reach small business owners in the Boston area, so using Pressboard's platform, they partnered with The Boston Globe to sponsor an article that gave the target audience business advice. By doing so, Mastercard was able to reach a specific audience and offer them engaging and informative content. Once you've captured the interest of the publisher's readership, your brand will be better positioned to earn their trust - and, hopefully, their business.



For almost any content campaign, examine your brand's resources, authority and audience when determining whether the content should be created and published by your brand or as sponsored content with a media publisher. Every content marketing plan should contain both, but this framework will help your brand find the right balance between the two.



HOW A MAJOR BANK USED BRANDED CONTENT TO MAKE NEW IMMIGRANTS FEEL WELCOME

THE CHALLENGE

TD, one of Canada's five big banks, needed a marketing campaign that highlighted their range of product offerings that make the transition of moving to Canada easier. They needed to let new immigrants know that TD is there to help them.

OUR SOLUTION

Pressboard worked with TD to build a comprehensive content campaign that generated eight original pieces of custom branded content. All content was created and measured through the Pressboard platform and published natively on four leading national digital publications. The content was designed to resonate with recent immigrants and provide them with helpful, engaging information that could jump-start their new lives in Canada, all through the unique voice of each media publisher.



Helping Your Kids Make Friends in a New Country Mar 29, 2017

For some kids, making friends comes easy. They simply run up to a group of children and join in the fun without a second thought. For others, making friends is more of a difficult task. Being shy or scared can definitely affect social interaction as a child.

CAMPAIGN

HIGHLIGHTS

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Campaign exceeded targets, resulting in

over \$13,000 in free

media value for TD.

Average reader spent

over 42 seconds

actively engaged with

the branded stories.

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Over 1.5K social

engagements as readers liked,

commented and

hared the stories with

friends and family.





5 Tips For Landing a Job After Moving to Canada

Mar 29, 2017

For 150 years, Canada has developed based on the principle that it embraces all religions, nationalities, ethnicities, and cultures and offers opportunities for all those who venture across its borders.





TD Helps Newcomers Build a Foundation For Their New Lives in Canada

May 15, 2017

In 2017, Canada is set to welcome 300,000 new immigrants, enriching the country's already diverse mosaic of cultures. Canada's renowned enthusiasm for...



All stories were presented by TD

Six things to do within six months of moving to Canada



Newcontext they fight and and pack load the molecula a food bent in Scaboorugh had (becomer, as part of the VM/s Leadenship Development program, US/TIN GREWES, / METROLAND)



here, it's mason to ecidentie, that arriving in a new country on he streaded, with a seemingly endlise list of tasks to accomplish, not to mention processes you may be unfamiliar with. Here are some actions to set yourself up for access right from the get-go. 1. Get your Canadian identity

One of the first things you'll need to do is obtain a Social Immunoce Number (SIN), since it'll be required for my job in the country. Thankfully, it's a straightforward process: You can apply for a SIS at my Service Canada celles.

If you have a driver's licescor, make sum to exchange it for a Canadian one — or, more accurately, a provincial one (licenses fail under the jurisdiction of the provinces). The locence from your home country may not be valid in Ottatico or may require poperwork for conversion.

Ottario has a universal, publicly funded health-rare system, though there's a three-month waiting period for OHIP (Ontario Mealth Jasuranee Plan) everage for most mercomers. It's a good idea to upply for OHIP as soon as possible, and use private insurance during the waiting

g. Get your finances in order

You can upon an account in Canada verse if you don't have a job or money to depend, according, to the Canadian Bardean Association. Naty haba's effer north-depending accounts in sevenment, as well as a variety of natrings accounts, including application dascounts created by the federal generatement for sevenment parts challenge avoing. The Timanet Canasiane Agency of Canada ene half with advice on bodgeting, banking, money treatment and plenning your finances.

3. Get prepped for the job market

(Fill, March 31, 201)

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4. Perfect your language skills

If you need to polish up on your English or Periodi, the federal government offers language classes to insuccentry at no cost1 (anguage lantrochin for Nerventures to Canada (LINC) and Costo de longen power in ismigrates tax as Donale (CUC). Beat of all, you can take them full-drive organization: charing the day, exeming or veoland; it is a classroom with other students or colline former own offer dograms mericos, as and at manaportation in and from class. Upon sompletion, you'll results a scriftlenic domaintring your skall lovel, which can be used as proof of meeting or entities language requirement.

5. Find a new home

nada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) provides newcomers with information on

wi're rewiting, find out what the rent includes (such is hydro). If yor're loging a home, you'll d a loan of profensionals to helpsyn: an appraiser, home inspector and lowyer. If you have analinal history or load horfwrense Olitane on resonances, you may find yourself at addpt dwartage. But have are programs that can help, such as mortgages for newnonner that dia't are a credit history.

6. Make neve friends



"You've got to stand for something."

JAMIE SMITH CHIEF COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER, BITFURY

THE 10 BEST BRANDED CONTENT **PARTNERSHIPS OF 2017**

This article was originally published on AdAge.com.

BY JERRID GRIMM CO-FOUNDER, PRESSBOARD

Branded content partnerships continue to grow in popularity, with advertisers allocating larger budgets towards the practice. This year, we saw an increased focus on inspirational content, which could be one of the factors that has led to a rise in audience attention. Here are the 10 best branded content partnerships of 2017.

I. EOUALIZING MUSIC: VICE + SMIRNOFF

When Vice's electronic music publication, Thump, crunched the numbers last year and revealed that women make up only 17% of the acts at major electronic music festivals, they partnered with Smirnoff to do something about it. By embarking on a joint mission to "double the women headliners in electronic music," they've created something even more impactful than the content itself purpose. Content that stands for something always stands out, especially with the 90% of millennials who would switch brands to one associated with a cause.



Smirnoff Equalizing Music.

2. CHASING A MOMENT: NATIONAL **GEOGRAPHIC + TOURISM NEW ZEALAND**

As with New Zealand, this campaign has it all: a celebrity, jaw-dropping views and food, wine and festival guides for every season. Featuring actress and filmmaker Bryce Dallas Howard, the series of videos and articles takes you across New Zealand and does an incredible job of showcasing everything the island nation has to offer.



Photograph by Julian Apse.

3. THE SECRET TO YOUR DISCOVER PLAYLIST? A "CYBORG" APPROACH: VOX + SPOTIFY

This Spotify partnership helped launch Vox's new Explainer Studio, a branded video offering that applies Vox's signature deep dives to brand stories. Learning how Spotify's customized Discover Playlists are built is intriguing for anyone into music or technology, but it's the story of how an obscure 70's synth-funk artist helped shape that process that really captures your attention.

The Cyborg Approach



Clip from "The Secret to Your Discover Playlist? A "Cyborg" Approach" on YouTube.



Visit Seattle kicked off the new year by debuting five incredible short films with Sundance TV. Ali Daniels, Visit Seattle's VP of Marketing, explains that the partnership was the result of challenging media partners to find more creative storytelling solutions. Daniels and her team understood that nonresidents would bring a new perspective to the story of Seattle that they couldn't do as locals. As proof that you can move quickly without sacrificing quality, each of the videos was shot in a single day.



Clip from "Visit Seattle | Sundance TV Project Five by Five" on YouTube

5. INSIDE THE MOMENT: THE WALL STREET JOURNAL + CHASE

AR promises to transport us to new places, without us ever leaving our chairs. The Wall Street Journal Custom Studios and Chase's Ritz-Carlton Rewards Card have done just that, taking audiences on 360-degree tours of three cities and nine must-see neighborhoods. At The Science of Storytelling conference in Toronto, WSJ's Jordan Hyman and Fara Warner shared that the risk of the new approach paid off, generating over half a million page views with a bounce rate of only 7%.



Inside the Moment: San Francisco

6. INSPIRATION OF JAPAN: GREAT BIG STORY + All Nippon Airways

This video series features ordinary individuals with incredible stories, reminding us all how storytelling is such a powerful way to showcase a brand. Each video offers up insight into what makes Japan a truly unique destination, focusing on the human aspect of everyday life to engage and inspire us.



Clip from "A Homemade Meal...From a Vending Machine" on YouTube.

7. FAMILY TRIPS: FATHERLY + AIRBNB

As a father myself, this series featuring dads sharing stories and photos from their family trips resonates in a profound way. It takes travel from the hypothetical to the practical, with Airbnb acting as a facilitator of the family bond.



Photo by Ryan Flood.

8. PHOTOGRAPHER SOPHIE GAMAND AND PITBULLS: THE DODO + SAMSUNG

This short film about the photographer who snaps adorable shots of pitbulls in floral might be one of the most viewed videos on this list, racking up an incredible 12M views on Facebook alone. The brand integration is subtle at first, with Sophie snapping a few photos on a Samsung device, then is woven in again via an interactive gallery using Samsung's Gear VR device, before you finally realize that the entire video was created on a Samsung Galaxy S8.



Clip from The Dodo's Facebook page.

9. THE ADVENTURIST: MEN'S HEALTH + Fitbit

In this partnership, writer Clint Carter was put up to the task of mastering three extreme sports in only five days, while tracking his heart rate and steps with a Fitbit. The series includes articles, short films and a full print feature in *Men's Health* magazine. Men's Health felt so strongly about the potential of the concept that they pitched the idea to Fitbit, not the other way around.



Photo by Matt Nager.

10. ".FUTURE": GIMLET MEDIA + MICROSOFT

Coming off the success of branded podcasts for advertisers such as Tinder and eBay, Gimlet Creative launched "future" with Microsoft this summer. The podcast explores new and future technologies, and examines how they're going to affect future generations. We're still in the early days of branded audio content, but this series demonstrates that good storytelling will always be heard.



Photo by Gimlet Media.

THE POWER OF USEFUL CONTENT AT THE RIGHT MOMENT

TD's CMO for Canadian Banking explains how customer-centric content for key life moments creates lifelong customers.

BY JERRID GRIMM CO-FOUNDER, PRESSBOARD

A famous proverb says that if you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.

It's also a good way to explain the sponsored content strategy at the TD.



TD is a major player when it comes to content marketing and sponsored content. What they've learned through their experience is that it's especially important to reach customers at key life stages, when they're looking for advice about things like buying a home, saving for their child's college tuition or opening an RRSP.

By helping customers navigate these and other financial challenges, the company hopes to show customers that they're there to support them — not just when they walk into the branch, but in all aspects of their financial lives. This strategy may require more time and effort than implementing a traditional advertising campaign, but by doing so, TD builds trust with their audience and creates customers for life.

This mindset is part of what drives Betsey Chung, TD's SVP and Chief Marketing Officer of Canadian Banking, to create powerful, useful content both in-house and with publishing partners.

Chung took on the role of CMO for Canadian Banking in the summer of 2017, but her experience with the organization began much earlier in her life.



"I actually started my career at TD Canada Trust," she explained. "I started when I was 18, and I was at three branches. Even back then I remember what a customer-centric place it was to work."

After working in the branches for five years, Chung left TD to continue her career. Still, she kept her eye on the company and its content efforts, following its journey over the years.

"I envied the brand because it was a brand that was not only familiar to me, but it's probably the preeminent brand in the banking industry right now. That appealed a lot," she said.

As part of her homecoming to the company with which she began her career, Chung brought with her a new mindset of being customer-centric. We spoke to her about what that means, what impact new technologies will have on marketing, and how she's preparing her team to meet any challenges head on.

You joined TD this year with a mandate to lead the organization from doing digital to being digital. I'm curious, what does "being digital" mean to you?

Digital for me is just one of many ways customers interact with us. I think it's really important, in terms of being digital, to realize that it's about deeply understanding customers' needs. This includes knowing what their journey is as they make a purchase decision, so that we understand that across the multiple touchpoints and are actually meeting their needs.

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Really for me it's about being customer-centric.

What role do you see content playing in your larger marketing mix?

I think content is everything. I think that it's so much more than what it used to be. What it used to be was a focus on SEO and on our websites, and making sure that we had content on our websites to optimize search. Now, I think it's everything.

From a customer perspective, it's all about their customer journey, and it's important to provide relevant and valuable pieces of information during that journey. I think there is a lot of room for banks across North America to get better at this.

This whole evolution towards helping customers at every single stage is an evolution that needs to happen. In this day and age, there's an empowerment that consumers feel, and it's very true and real. The opportunity for all of us, whether you're at TD or whether you're in any other industry or working with any other player, is really to help your customers throughout their lives with valuable and relevant content.

How do you define whether the content that you have in market is successful or not with that customer journey?

It's interesting because when you look at it for any one of our customer needs, customers go through a number of touchpoints, whether physical or digital, and oftentimes it's in excess of 25 touchpoints before they become a customer. Sometimes it's even 200 touchpoints.

I think that the way to define success can't be linear because a customer's path to purchase isn't linear. There are tools like multi-touch attribution that do a better job at defining, for every touchpoint, what that contributes in terms of conversion. However, I think that's only one of many tools. The success factor is about customer engagement.

Gone are the days where you define success in terms of a monetary success. Because customers are complex, and they've got complex needs with complex pathways, you actually need to think through more customer loyalty metrics as success. Consider things like attrition. If I could decrease attrition over time of my customers, then that's success. Essentially, if you are able to use content to drive customer loyalty, then that's a different barometer of success than customer acquisition, for instance.

You were talking about the customer touchpoints. Some players in the customer service industry are focused on devoting resources towards Al-based customer service solutions. What challenges does bringing Al solutions to the market present for you as a marketer?

Al is just so interesting. I was at Google last week in Mountain View and we talked about machine learning. I think that voice and how customers interact using voice is an area that we really need to continue to understand.



A certain percentage of customers are now using voice activated search rather than typing in their search queries. These are areas of Al that we need to make sure we understand to improve customer interaction.

The other element of AI that providers like Google are utilizing involves the way we do search. People used to do manual bidding. Now it's all automated bidding. It's so automated, in fact, that now it learns. It's almost one of those things where you could rely upon the algorithm to learn, and then to improve, and to optimize. That whole evolution is really, really something that could allow marketers spend their time on the strategy rather than the operations piece.

What are some things that you can do as a leader within your organization to get your organization better versed in these technologies?

It's been really interesting for me coming to TD because we invest so much in our employee base in terms of their employee experience and their learning. I've never seen anything like it. We've now designed something called digital IQ, which is 14 modules of learning in terms of digital marketing fundamentals. It ranges from SEM, to SEO, to display, to content, to even technologies and capabilities like data management platforms. It's a huge investment in people and their learning in this space that continues to evolve.

I think that's unique for TD amongst its competitors. We designed the program, and it's one of many examples of how we're ensuring that our people stay on top of the evolving needs of the customer.

With all this knowledge base that you're building internally for your team, are you inclined to bring some of the marketing functions that were traditionally outsourced and conduct them in-house?

I think at TD, we've got some amazing agency partners. It's a collaboration model rather than an in-house model. I think that it really depends on what the core competency of a bank is, and whether you want to stick to the core competency and do that incredibly, incredibly well, or you want to bring some of the things that aren't core competencies in-house. I'm of the general view that there's core competencies that agencies have that they'll continue to have, and there's core competencies that the bank has that we will continue to have. I think that the collaboration model is a better model than one where we're going to take things in-house.

What advice do you have for other brands or marketers in the financial services

industry whose content marketing efforts might not be as mature as they are at TD?

If you're in this space, you've got to get comfortable with not knowing everything because things move every single week. There's a new player, there's a new piece of technology to learn. If you want to be a constant student and you've got an innate curiosity either personally or as a corporate culture, that's going to pay off for you. It pays off for people personally. It pays off for corporations that are willing to be students.

Outside of the financial industry, are there any brands when it comes to content, that you think are really setting a high watermark or a brand that you aspire TD to act like in the content space?

I think Nike's interesting. They seem to have a good understanding of how they're going to leverage their content in one voice across various channels. I think that's a player to look at in terms of what they've done and what are the lessons learned there.





I think content is everything. I think that it's so much more than what it used to be. From a customer perspective, it's all about their customer journey, and it's important to provide relevant and valuable pieces of information during that journey.

BETSEY CHUNG CMO CANADIAN BANKING, TD CANADA TRUST

HOW TO EFFECTIVELY MENTION A BRAND IN SPONSORED CONTENT (STUDY)

First-of-its-kind data analysis shows that it's better to mention your brand strategically than repeatedly.

BY LEAH BJORNSON AND DAVID RICHARDS CONTENT MANAGER AND DATA SCIENCE SPECIALIST, PRESSBOARD

It's a question that brands and publishers have pondered for a long time: how and when should a brand be integrated into sponsored content?

Thanks to a new study of over 300 pieces of sponsored content, we finally have the data to answer it.



When done well, integrating the brand can supplement sponsored content with the company's expertise to create something meaningful and valuable for audiences. When done poorly, it can result in a Frankenstein-like mix of the brand's and publisher's voices that feels more like a traditional ad than actual content.

We all know how quickly readers can figure out which is which. We see it in the comments section or in the amount of time readers spend on the page. So, we turned to the experts (the readers) to see if we could learn a thing or two from them.

Pressboard collects tens of thousands of data points every day from the sponsored content created through our platform, most of which is related to how readers are interacting with the content. To understand the impact of brand mentions in that content, we dug through that data to answer the following questions:

1. How early in a piece of sponsored content should a brand be mentioned?

2. How many times should a brand be mentioned in a piece of sponsored content?

The results finally prove what content experts' instincts have been telling them all along:

If the brand is mentioned **too close to the start** of a sponsored article, engagement levels will be negatively affected. On average, readers spent 12 seconds longer reading articles when the brand was mentioned halfway through the article as opposed to when the brand was mentioned in the first 100 words. When the brand's name appears **multiple times** in a piece of sponsored content, it **negatively affects** the amount of time readers spend engaging with it. When a brand was mentioned only once, readers spent an average of 69.6 seconds reading the article. As more brand mentions were added, reading time fell dramatically.

The study also highlighted a few insights that we didn't expect.

As it turns out, sponsored content in which brand mentions are placed sparingly and strategically actually perform *better* than sponsored content devoid of any brand mentions. Many in the industry have often assumed otherwise: that sponsored content performs better when the brand isn't mentioned at all. However, it appears that a thoughtfully placed brand mention can actually engage readers and encourage them to read more of the content.

Sponsored articles without any brand mentions performed well (with an average active reading time of 63.5 seconds and a scroll rate of 78%), but still failed to outpace content with one brand mention.

That said, two words here are key: sparingly and strategically. Where and how many times the brand is mentioned can have a significant impact on the effectiveness of sponsored content, so it's important to get it right.

To help advertisers and content creators produce more impactful content, we've outlined the effect that placement and occurrence of brand mentions have on reader engagement.

THE DATA

For this analysis, we considered two factors: **placement** (where the first brand mention occurs in the sponsored article) and **occurrence** (the number of brand mentions in a sponsored article). We then analysed their impact on two metrics:

- Active Reading Time: How long the reader is actively engaging with the branded content. Unlike Google's Time on Page metric, Pressboard's Active Reading Time measure all visitors to a page and analyzes how active and engaged they are.
- Scrolling Behavior: What percentage of the piece of content a user scrolled through before leaving. Scrolling is a key indicator of content interest, and better content will mean that users scroll further down.

Our sample comprised 331 sponsored content pieces that were published and

measured through the Pressboard platform by North America's top brands and publishers. To ensure the statistics were consistent, we normalized the content to calculate reading time and scrolling behavior as if the length of each article was 750 words. You can read more about this in our methodology section.

PLACEMENT: HOW EARLY IN A PIECE OF SPONSORED CONTENT SHOULD A BRAND BE MENTIONED?

PLACEMENT VS. ACTIVE READING TIME



Placement's Effect on Active Reading Time

When the first brand mention occurred later in a sponsored story, readers were likely to spend more time engaging with the content.

Articles in which the brand was mentioned in the first 100 words saw an average active reading time of **56.2 seconds**. Compare this to articles in which the brand was mentioned after the first 300 words, which saw an average active reading time of **68.1 seconds**. That's a difference of 12 seconds that a reader is spending engaging with (or not engaging with) your content.

This essentially gives us a sweet spot for brand mentions, letting content creators thoughtfully integrate a brand while also improving the overall performance of the story.

However, there are limits to how late in the article a brand should be mentioned. The results show that when the first brand mention appeared near the bottom of a sponsored piece, in the 600-750-word range, active reading time was reduced, falling to 66.3 seconds.

Sweet Spot: 300-600-word range

PLACEMENT VS. PERCENT SCROLLED



Placement's Effect on Percent Scrolled

Where a brand mention was placed had a slightly less dramatic effect on the percentage of the content a user scrolled through. Still, the results are in line with active reading time.

Data shows that if the brand mention happened in the first 100 words of the piece, readers only scrolled through an average of 72% of the article.

When the first brand mention occurred in the 300-600-word range, readers scrolled through 80.5% of the article. Scrolling behavior continued to improve when the brand mention occurred late in the article, with readers making their way down an average of 81.5% of the page.

This is interesting because while a late mention negatively affected active reading time, it had the opposite effect on scrolling behavior. A reader will still make it most of the way down the page, regardless of where the brand is placed.

Sweet Spot: 300-600-word range

OCCURRENCE: HOW MANY TIMES SHOULD A BRAND BE MENTIONED IN A PIECE OF SPONSORED CONTENT?

OCCURRENCE VS. ACTIVE READING TIME



Occurrence's Effect on Active Reading Time

The most dramatic result we saw concerns the effect the number of brand mentions had on active reading time.

When a brand was mentioned only once, readers spent an average of 69.6 seconds reading the article. As soon as another mention occurred, that number dropped to 61 seconds, and as more brand mentions were added, reading time continued to fall. Readers spent an average of 57.3 seconds with articles with three to four brand mentions, and 55.5 seconds with articles with five or more.

This is consistent with most marketers' expectations. If a reader feels that the focus of the article is more on your brand than on the story you're telling, they're less likely to engage with it.

Sweet Spot: 1 brand mention

OCCURRENCE VS. PERCENT SCROLLED



Occurrence's Effect on Percent Scrolled

In content where the brand mention occurred only once, readers made it an average of 80% of the way through the article.

As brand mentions increased, the percentage of the page that readers scrolled through fell: in articles with two brand mentions, readers scrolled down 76.8% on average; in articles with three to four brand mentions, the number was 76.4%; articles with more than five brand mentions saw the lowest scroll rate, of 74%.

Though there is an evident correlation between occurrence and percent scrolled from examining the data, the relationship is not statistically significant. With more data, it is likely that we'd see a strong relationship develop.

Sweet Spot: 1 brand mention

DOES NOT MENTIONING YOUR BRAND HELP OR HURT YOU?

In reviewing the data, something that surprised us was that leaving the brand out of the article entirely doesn't always result in more engaging content.

Placement:

Branded content that mentioned the brand in the 300-750-word range had a higher active reading time than content that didn't mention the brand. Readers also scrolled further down the page when the brand appeared after the first 100 words than they did when no brand was mentioned.

Occurrence:

Sponsored articles without any brand mentions performed well (with an average active reading time of 63.6 seconds and a scroll rate of 77.9%), but still failed to outpace content with one brand mention.

This is a good lesson to marketers and content creators that you don't have to hide or bury the brand when creating sponsored content. By being thoughtful about where and how it's being mentioned, you can actually drive curiosity with readers and encourage them to engage more with your content.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The findings related to both active reading time and percent scrolled support the conclusion that brands should be mentioned sparingly and strategically in branded content. With that in mind, the study produced important insights that should help guide your content creation efforts:

Q. How early in a piece of sponsored content should a brand be mentioned?

A. The best place to first mention the brand

is part-way through the article, in the 300-600-word range. By introducing the brand after the introduction, it enables the brand to add value or insights in a supportive role, as opposed to being positioned as the focus of the piece, which may not be as interesting for readers.

That said, a brand shouldn't wait until the very end of the article to surprise the audience with their integration. Doing so may cause readers to exit the article due to perception of having been tricked into reading to the end of a story that turns out to be branded.

If the product messaging doesn't naturally fit within the article itself, it might be better to include it in a branded footer at the end of the content. Every sponsored article published through our platform includes a branded footer that we encourage advertisers to use to include key brand messaging and a strong call to action.



Q. How many times should a brand be mentioned in a piece of sponsored content?

A. When it comes to deciding how many times your brand should be mentioned in the article, the rule is simple: less is more. Mentioning your brand doesn't penalize you – in fact, the data suggests that it's better to introduce your brand than to avoid including it at all. But advertisers and their content partners should do so sparingly, as with each additional mention, readers lose interest and disengage.

METHODOLOGY NOTE

Defining a Brand Mention

One challenge this study presented was ensuring that we captured every possible instance where the sponsoring brand was mentioned in a piece of sponsored content. With tens of thousands of data points to analyze, manually verifying each client mention would have taken us years to accomplish!

To speed up the process, we used a natural language processing system to identify named entities within the text and count any entities that were similar to the brand's name. The similarities between these named entities and the brand names was calculated using Jaro-Winkler similarity measurement. All entities that had a similarity above a prespecified cutoff (0.7) were considered brand mentions. For example, phrases like "TD Investments" or "TD Line of Credit" were counted as a mention of the brand TD.

We excluded articles from the analysis where the sponsored content was not about the brand directly. For example, articles sponsored by tourism boards, which often promote businesses and events in the region, were not included in the study.

Length of Articles

The amount of time readers spend engaging with branded content is obviously impacted by the length of the content. To make sure that stories of different lengths were analyzed equally in the study, we used a normalization method that divided the average time spent on page by the number of words in the article and then multiplied by 750. That calculation computes the average time of engagement for every piece of sponsored content as if the length was 750 words. We also limited the analysis to stories between 250-1000 words in length.

Statistical Significance:

Statistical analysis was run using **SciPy** and **NumPy**. The relationships were tested using a One-Way ANOVA test. The F-statistics calculated were under the null hypothesis that the group means are equal. The alternative hypothesis was that at least one group is not equal.

THIS MEDIA COMPANY WENT NUDE IN THE NAME OF BRANDED CONTENT

The cheeky move earned their client 2,500 new followers.

BY LEAH BJORNSON CONTENT MANAGER, PRESSBOARD

On November 27th, the 180,000 Instagram followers of Daily Hive Vancouver noticed something strange. The massively popular Instagram account for the local media publisher had been wiped clear of all content.



Fans reacted immediately. Calls and emails flooded in. Many worried that the account had been hacked or that the popular feed, known for its stunning Vancouver-centric lifestyle photography, had been wiped for good.

TOTAL INSTAGRAM BLACKOUT

A few hours after the initial activation, the motive was revealed. Six new posts appeared announcing a partnership between Daily Hive Vancouver and Nude Vodka Soda. To celebrate the launch of their most recent flavour, Nude was hosting a contest with a pretty luxurious prize: an all-expenses-paid trip to Whistler for four, including limo, hotel, dinner, spa trip and, naturally, a solid supply of Nude soda. Entrants merely had to tag the three friends they'd want to travel with. Call me a content geek (I won't be offended!), but I found a total Instagram blackout even more interesting than the prospect of a weekend away at BC's most famous slopes.

Taking advantage of Instagram's new archive feature, Daily Hive was able to temporarily hide all of their existing content to showcase their sponsored partnership and contest with Nude. Archiving images is an easily reversible way to totally disrupt your audience's visual routine while scrolling through the feed. By allowing a brand the chance to be the only content visible on a digital platform, the publisher was able to entice consumers in a more focused way. It's a bold statement, and one that certainly got a lot of attention. I immediately reached out to the creatives behind the blackout to learn more about what inspired the partnership, and how the chips all fell after Daily Hive's content returned to its regular programming. Speaking to Alex Harvey, co-founder and managing director of Colony Digital, the in-house creative division of Daily Hive, I got a glimpse into how they pulled off the activation.

Nude Vodka Soda had approached the team at Colony for their marketing needs, knowing they wanted to do something that hadn't been done before. They got what they hoped for with an Instagram blackout. "It was almost a no-brainer in terms of marketing and the incredible impact we knew this kind of activation could have, in how it could disrupt the status quo of advertising," said Harvey.

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In an agile space such as digital, it could be seen as pretty surprising that something as simple as disrupting a social media profile could cause so much stress and concern in the market. But it also revealed the attention and degree of connection followers have with Daily Hive through social media – and the responsibility we took on to deliver something great that provided their fans with real value.

BEHIND THE PARTNERSHIP

A young Vancouver-based startup, Nude launched this year and set a new standard within the alcohol industry: an entirely sugar and sweetener-free alcoholic beverage with only 100 calories per can. Using triple distilled vodka, sparkling water and allnatural fruit extracts, Nude positions itself as a healthier, more natural product.

Daily Hive Vancouver's audience is, like the majority of young Vancouverites, focused on healthy living by day, and dining and exciting nightlife when the sun goes down. Their similar audiences made Nude and Daily Hive a perfect pair; this is incredibly important



when a brand selects a media publisher for sponsored content, but even more so with something as significant as a total advertising blackout.

"We had to ensure that Daily Hive's own brand was honoured. They take extreme care in serving their social media followers with valuable content," said Harvey. "In the end, we delivered something that worked for not just Nude Soda, but also for Daily Hive's audience. It was entertaining, interesting – and the social media engagement that resulted was proof of that in both cases."

With a 2.5% engagement rate, the response was benchmark-blowing compared to typical sponsored Instagram posts. The activation was commented on 5,704 times and garnered 8,456 likes. At the end of the campaign, Nude's Instagram account had earned 2,500 new followers.

Nude Vodka had a vision of where they wanted to be, and we at Colony Digital helped accelerate the process, making Nude Vodka Soda number one in the Canadian cooler category, said Harvey.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Sponsored content pushes your brand's story in front of an existing audience in a

relevant, engaging way. A social media blackout pushes the limits of what we typically consider sponsored content, but it certainly tells a story.

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The idea inspired us to reframe how we think about our Instagram advertising placements, and in this way, show that we stand behind the brands we help promote on the platform.

As for future Instagram partnerships with Daily Hive or other publishers, Harvey is quick to note that in order for these campaigns to be impactful, they have to be rare. "Think of it as a lightning strike in the middle of the night – much more effective and enticing than a redundant strobe light."



CASE STUDY

THE CHALLENGE

Chase needed a way to promote their Southwest Airlines Rapid Rewards card online. They knew that the card's primary audience was travel enthusiasts and that they wanted to reach them through content. The problem? Chase is a major financial services company, and is not recognized by audiences as an authority in travel.

OUR SOLUTION

Chase used the Pressboard platform to partner with popular lifestyle publisher, Mashable, and place a piece of sponsored content on their site about affordable travel. The story on Mashable was designed to build excitement and awareness around the card by tapping into readers' interest in summer travel.

CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHTS				
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Content overdelivered on its goal by almost 160%!	Generated over 3.2K social media engagements!	Average rea consumed 63 the conten		



e reader



How to achieve your summer travel goals without breaking the bank

Jun 15, 2017

We all have responsibilities that need to be accounted for when we're thinking of planning a summer trip. Whether it's your rent, your bills, or some other expense that is making you hesitate to book your dream vacation, we can all relate to that travel FOMO.

CHASE + Mashable



Earn 6 (1), 63 (1) (1) point

2.3k



3. Cook and ea

4. Make memories instead of human

randed footer and footer image accompanied each story



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I think the best stories always end up being about the people rather than the event, which is to say character-driven.

STEPHEN KING

2017 BRANDED CONTENT BENCHMARKS REPORT (INFOGRAPHIC)

This newly updated report highlights the most important branded content benchmarks for marketers.

BY SHAWN RAGELL MARKETING MANAGER, PRESSBOARD

At Pressboard, we believe that content is the most powerful way for brands to communicate with consumers. That's why we built a platform that makes it easy for brands to collaborate with hundreds of media publishers to create and measure branded content instead of ads.

To date, we've worked with over 400 brands and digital publishers across North America to help create branded articles and videos that have been consumed by millions of people. This means we're constantly receiving an incredible amount of data that gives us exclusive insight into how branded content actually performs. And we want to share it with you!

Since releasing our first Branded Content Benchmarks Report last year, we've received messages from marketers and media companies all over the world who have found it helpful for understanding what metrics they should be using to evaluate branded content campaigns. Using data pulled from over 1,300 pieces of sponsored content created by brands and publishers through Pressboard's platform, we've compiled an updated 2017 Branded Content Benchmarks Report that details how branded content performed in 2017. The report aims to help marketers go beyond impressions and clicks to better understand the metrics and benchmarks they should be using to measure branded content.

This infographic breaks down a few of the key insights we found:



Percent A measure of what percentage of the piece of content a user scrolled through before leaving. Scrolling is a key indicator of content interest, and before content will mean that users scroll interest down.



Download the full Branded Cantent Benchmarks Report get.pressboardmedia.com/branded-content-benchmarks-2017 Reflecting on all the data collected and analyzed in this report, it's clear that branded content is an increasingly powerful and essential part of the media mix for advertisers of all sizes and across all industries. By releasing this data publicly, our hope is to help the entire industry grow globally, and inspire advertisers and media publishers to continually work towards crafting better content together.

DOWNLOAD YOUR FREE MEDIA BUYER'S GUIDE TO BRANDED CONTENT

Over 50 pages of free advice on branded content from the world's leading media buyers, brands, and publishers! From ideation to execution, learn how to create successful branded content partnerships.

Download your copy at

get.pressboardmedia.com/media-buyers-guide-branded-content



ABOUT PRESSBOARD

The #1 Platform For Buying Sponsored Content

Drive brand awareness and acquisition by placing your brand's content on the world's most influential media properties.

Reach New Audiences in a Brand-Safe Environment

Your brand has a story to tell. Pressboard's Marketplace is packed with influential and trusted media publishers that are ready to share it with their audiences.





The Guaranteed Way to Raise Brand Awareness

Take the guesswork out of PR. Simply select a publisher you want to work with and upload your brand's content. All content is published natively and is clearly labeled as being presented by your brand.



Pressboard's dashboard tracks who's viewing your content and measures exactly how engaged they are across a wide range of metrics. Optimize your brand's content in real time and easily prove ROI.

Traffic Sources Total Reads/Average Reading Time Reads: 895

Ready to tell your brand's story? Contact us at info@pressboardmedia.com pressboardmedia.com | Vancouver | Toronto | New York

