

Entry: Best Use Of Innovation

Title: Virgin Media Goggleboxers

Campaign: Virgin Media TV360

Client: Virgin Media

Agency: OMD

Background and Objectives

Virgin Media had a problem, they had the best broadband in town, a fantastic brand but were being let down by their low performing TV “Horizon” box. SKY Q owned this market with a vastly superior product backed by a ginormous marketing spend over many years. SKY spent over €20m on SKY Q over the past 5 years mainly focusing on the functionality and features of the box within their commercials. This was borne out in the market share numbers with SKY having 40% of the subscription TV market whereas Virgin had only 16%.

The TV experience is much more tactile and physical than broadband, and Virgin were too familiar with customer complaints and their dissatisfaction with Horizon “the TV box has not recorded again”. The perception of the Horizon box was damaging their pNPS and image sores for Virgin TV. This was affecting the overall brand preference scores. The inverse was positively affecting SKY who used the halo of their fantastic TV offering to help sell their broadband.

- The launch of TV360 in October 2020 would allow Virgin to compete with SKY on a level playing field for the first time
- The business objectives were very clear to sell TV360 to new and existing customers
- The launch of TV360 would help change the perception of Virgin TV and close the gap with SKY, thereby improving overall brand scores
- The comms plan focused on Awareness, Educate, Sales and Advocacy. The focus of this entry is the Educate layer

The new box had loads of new features, some new in the TV space but most of them just catching up to what SKY had done. Getting customers to pay attention to old news is hard to do and with trust in Virgin’s TV offering so low, simply claiming the box was quality wouldn’t be enough. We had to partner with **someone who was believable.**

We couldn’t compete on spend with SKY and this meant we had to do something that would have **cut-through and impact.**



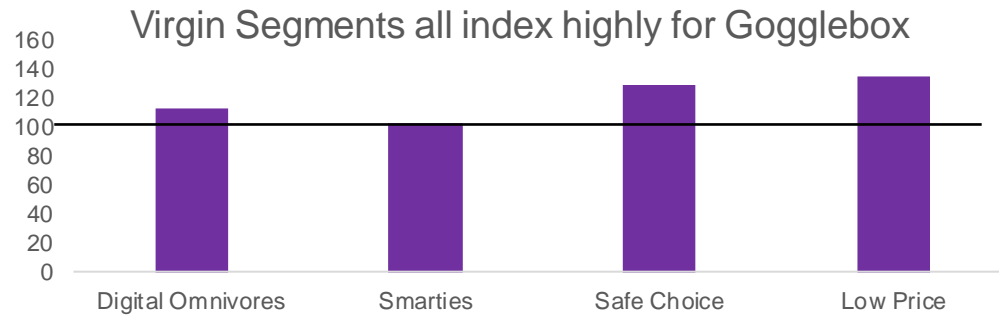
Our main TV ad for TV360

The Strategy

Using various brainstorming techniques, we tried to answer the challenge of “**How Might We** make our new TV box part of the conversation in Irish living rooms and explain how it works”.

We struck on the idea of getting Ireland's most famous TV critics to discuss our new TV box. Gogglebox is one of Ireland's most popular TV programmes. Audiences average at close to 200k per show. Its characters have become micro celebrities who are instantly recognisable to most of the nation. We all know about the Ryan's from Limerick, the Cabra girls' and the Moran's from Portlaoise. It takes viewers from their own living rooms to someone else's for an hour on a Wednesday night.

We backed up the insight with TGI data, showing Gogglebox to be one of the favourite shows for all our audience segments.



Source:TGI

As this was all about a TV product, TV as a channel was a natural home. It allowed us reach customers in their living rooms while watching the Gogglebox TV reviewers on TV, talking about the Virgin TV360 box on the Virgin TV station. It was perfect synergy of media and brand.

This was a unique project with many moving parts, we needed to work closely with the client and the media owner. As both were the same group it was an opportunity for us to help integrate these two separate parts of the business. We began tripartite meetings and met regularly throughout the process. It was critical that firstly the idea would be brought to fruition and secondly for the best plan to execute the strategy. There was a lot of extra work and effort at a difficult time because of COVID but without the passion from all the organisations, the plan would not have got off the drawing board.

At the outset, we first needed to see if it was possible to use the Gogglebox families in an ad and how much it would cost. This involved two other parties Kite Productions in Dublin and their partner Lambert Studios in London. Licencing and rights needed to be agreed plus costs for filming and providing the rushes to VMS for editing. Once this was agreed we were able to make the business case for the media investment and green light the project.

We then moved on to the detailed media planning element to ensure we maximised return on the bespoke creative and media investment.



Clip from our Gogglebox takeover

The Plan

The ad was very unique and so was its placement. To feel like a programme it needed to be solus in break. The ad was 2.5 minutes long but very few ad breaks are of this length. So the first task was to make a long list of all the ad breaks that could be shortened to 2.5 minutes, which we did working closely with VMS.

Once this was established, the programming strategy was based on:

- Perfect fit - Gogglebox
- High volume – Coronation Street, Emmerdale, News
- High levels of light viewers – 6 Nations, Dramas
- Talked about programming – Graham Norton, Ireland AM

It was a programme led campaign with 16 spots, handpicked by break, time of day and day of week across a 4-week period starting on Jan 25th. The campaign began with our highest rating programme to build cover and we never had more than one spot per day to help maximise cover. So for example, we had, Coronation Street as the first spot of the campaign which appeared on a Monday followed by Ireland AM on Tuesday, Gogglebox on Wednesday and so on.

Although we bought a modest 63.45 TVRs in total we were able to reach 30.6% of the total population, equating to 1.359m individuals.

We also had 30" social cutdowns of the 2.5m ad that were used to extend reach across TV's best social friend, Twitter, on the nights the spots went out. This produced c. ¼ million views and an outstanding 2.51% engagement rate highlighting the appeal of the content.



Clip from our Gogglebox takeover

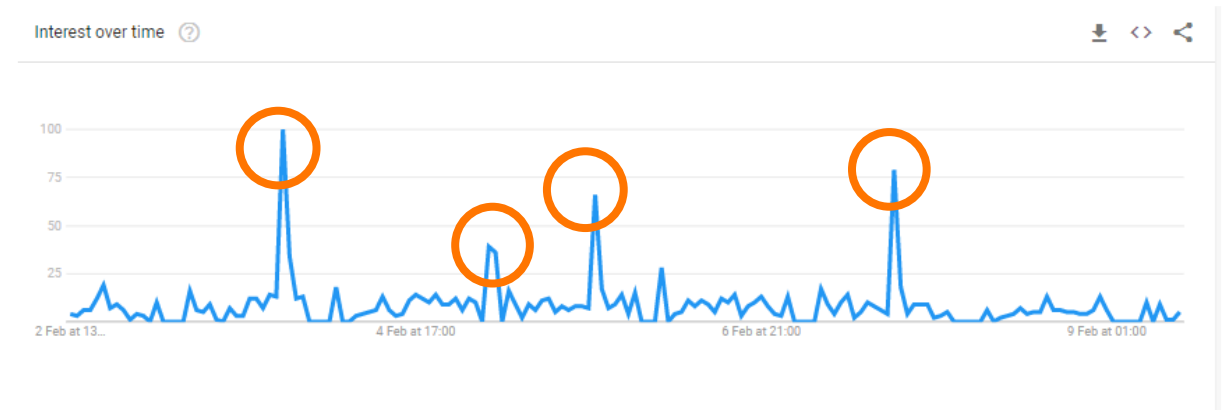
The Results

The “Goggleboxer” media spend was less than €100k and less than 5% of the total TV360 launch. It is therefore not possible to accurately attribute the results of this element of the campaign.

Something very obvious though was happening to our search activity. When looking at Google trends, there were spikes in searches the days our spots aired. We do not see that with any of our Virgin TV activity, this campaign was different, people were intrigued and wanted to find out more once they had seen the ads.

And at a wider level the campaign results have been a resounding success.

KPI	Target	Results
TV Sales	n/a	15%
Total Sales	+11%	+12%
TV Consideration	+5 pts	+9 pts
TV NPS	+20 pts	+54 pts
TV Preference	n/a	+54%
Gap v SKY	11 pts	7 pts
Total Brand Preference	n/a	+6.7%



Google Trends – Circles relate to air time

We have no doubt that the “Goggleboxer” activity played a significant role in the significant success of the campaign. So much so that we are currently planning a second burst of activity, with the client, for later in the year.

Client Involvement

“Education was a key element of our launch plan for Virgin TV360 and who better to promote our all new set top box than Ireland’s favourite TV viewers, the Goggleboxers. We loved the brand fit as well as the media innovation of this idea when OMD first presented it to us. And it executed into a brilliantly disruptive piece of content that commercially delivered for both the cable and the television side of the business. This initiative is a world class example of how great collaboration and belief in a creative idea can drive effective business results and build brand advocacy”. **(Fiona Mahon, Senior Marketing Manager, Virgin Media Ireland).**

“At VMTV we’re always looking at innovative ways to speak to the audience and create new commercial opportunities. Gogglebox has been an incredibly successful show for us. It represents viewers like no other show, representing so many different makeups of our society. That creates an exciting opportunity for us to collaborate on, but also one we are very protective of. Our cast aren’t actors, and that limits what we can expect from them, but also adds a dimension of authenticity to anything we connect them with. The VM360 campaign allowed us to tap into this, and seeing the cast explore the box in their own homes and react in their normal way allowed for some great moments that tapped into the heart of what makes the show really great”. **(Anthony Nilan, Executive Producer, Virgin Media Television)**

