

Best Ongoing Use of TV

McDonald's Sponsorship of Family Entertainment on Virgin Media Television



core™ Sponsorship



Campaign Name: McDonald's Sponsorship of Family Entertainment on Virgin Media Television.

Entrant Company: Core Sponsorship
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Collaborating Organisations: McDonald's, Zenith, Virgin Media Television, Core Sponsorship.

Background & Objectives (Marked out of 10) (200 words)

State the business, marketing and communications objectives that lay behind the communication investment.

Background

In November 2018, McDelivery launched in the Irish market. Over the first 20 months it gradually scaled up to a sufficient level which allowed McDonald's to deploy a national communications strategy in 2020.

In November 2020 McDonald's sponsored I'm A Celebrity Get Me Out of Here on Virgin Media Television as part of the McDelivery launch campaign, it was a huge part of the autumn schedule being one of the biggest shows of the year. The sponsorship proved to be effective for our target audience, so we renewed the sponsorship for November 2021. From then we took our partnership to the next level by sponsoring Family Entertainment on Virgin Media Television in 2022 which included 13 different shows.

What were the long-term broad objectives of the business and what were its main challenges?

The main objective of this sponsorship campaign was to build awareness of McDelivery.

Our challenge was to get frequent / current McDonald's customers and heavy delivery users that aren't aware that McDonald's delivers or haven't considered McDelivery as a way to get their

favourite order. We also wanted to improve the perception of McDonald's as a great option for dinner amongst families.

2) The Media and Brand Story (Marked out of 50) (1000 words)

Describe how the planning and use of TV has evolved over time to produce results for the brand.

At the outset of the sponsorship, I'm A Celeb was chosen as the sponsorship platform to help launch McDelivery as it offered the perfect opportunity to reach McDonald's target audience with appointment to view content.

The partnership evolved over time due to the growing challenge for McDelivery to maintain momentum and to stand out in an cluttered environment as consumer habits changed due to COVID 19.

Brand objectives for each year explained.

- **2020 - Raise awareness of McDelivery.**

When McDelivery was launched in 2020, the goal was to drive awareness of the new delivery offering. In order to achieve this we needed something big, that was bang on for our McDelivery target audience of 15-34's. The awareness of McDelivery in Ireland (pre-covid) was relatively limited with only 1 in 5 adults being aware of it. (Core Research February 2020). We needed a national, high frequency sponsorship with a number of touchpoints across linear, digital, and social to drive awareness and fast.

- **2021 - Continue to stand out in the crowd amongst an ever increasingly cluttered category.**

In 2021 the world was still reeling from the previous year and COVID 19 was very much still part of our lives with ongoing restrictions. Our objectives remained consistent with raising awareness of McDelivery, but we now also needed to stand out in an increasingly cluttered environment as more restaurants were promoting their delivery services with stores being close. McDonald's had once again renewed their sponsorship of I'm A Celeb for the second year as it had proved to be successful in year one and remained one of the biggest shows in the autumn schedule.

In 2021 the Sponsorship ROMS were not as strong as the standard TV ROMS. However, given the cost of the Sponsorship to be over doubling the return on investment we viewed it as a win as it also tied in with the Byron Sharp theory of the need to not only drive short term sales but build a brand.

- **2022 - Continue momentum after the series of IAC ends and improve perception that McDonald's is a great choice for dinner.**

Whilst we could see that the sponsorship of, I'm a Celeb was proving to be effective, once the series finished in early December the use of McDelivery dipped again. To counteract this, we devised a bespoke package with VMTV that would allow McDelivery to exist within a similar space but spread

out consistently throughout the year. Starting immediately when IAC ended in Nov 2021, we started the Family Entertainment package which consisted of 13 of the biggest entertainment shows across the schedule. The sponsorship allowed McDonald's to feature a broad range of stings featuring McDonalds products promoting the cravability of McDonald's food and driving demand when viewers were primed to make a decision as to what to have for dinner.

Show how the marketing strategy evolved in response to business results or competitive activity.

Our marketing strategy for McDonald's evolved in response to two elements, business results in relation to the awareness of McDelivery and COVID 19.

After our initial sponsorship of IAC, whilst we saw an increase in the awareness levels of McDelivery we also saw the results dip in December after the show finished. In response to this we created the bespoke package of Family entertainment on VTVMV in order to carry the momentum through in 2022 and beyond.

At the start of 2022, Core Research published their Predicting 2022 report. At the centre of this report, was the findings that 'Home is where the heart is'. In this report, Core Research reported TV as the medium that performed a critical role in entertaining and stimulating its audiences, whether that be through more considered solus viewing or family bonding time.

But as a result of COVID 19, the consumer journey had changed, and touchpoints were different. From a media perspective we could see that viewing habits were changing and that co-viewing moments at scale for families are very rare and harder to find with a single property. Taking this research into account, we focused on maximising our effort around these co-viewing TV moments where families and friends sit down together in the evening to enjoy light entertainment on TV.

Impact of COVID 19

The onset of the COVID 19 pandemic changed the terrain for McDelivery and since reopening in May 2020 after the first lockdown, McDelivery became a more important channel for McDonald's as old routines had been disrupted and delivery usage was expected to continue to grow.

At the time, competitors were also increasing investment in this space, so it was critical that we chose a sponsorship that enabled McDelivery to stand out stand out in an increasingly cluttered environment.

We knew, through research, that the dinner-at-home occasion continued to be the biggest McDelivery opportunity. The meal-for-one and meal-for-two made up 50% of all purchases but we were under-developed in larger group occasions (3+ and families) * so this was an opportunity and an area of growth for McDelivery.

*Occasion Segmentation Study, March 2019 **Millward Brown 2018 study US, UK, CAN, JPN

As the crisis progressed, more and more people turned to TV as by far the single most important source of news and information.

Explain the role for TV and how this has developed, taking the media learnings gathered and incorporating these into the subsequent plans each time.

The role for TV

No other form of advertising can build scale as quickly and powerfully as TV. This was crucial as no-one can truly predict who might end up a customer. Advertising with mass reach builds brand desirability and creates fame, which we took on board to be the most effective advertising strategy to launch McDelivery.

We also know that the effects of TV advertising accumulate over time; the longer you advertise, the bigger the effect, it is vital for long-term success.

TV was our main awareness driver; it is the biggest source of return for McDonald's. TV helped to build positive brand association between entertainment/downtime and McDonald's. We needed a broad channel given our broad appeal, but families will always be the heart of McDonald's plans.

McDonald's undertake econometrics studies annually on all media activity and TV continues to drive the best return on investment for the brand, we were willing to invest in the channel as we knew a positive return was very likely. We could see from sales trends, that the evening time, post 7pm, is when McDelivery is at its busiest, and we wanted a strategy that really exploited this time when family and friends are sitting down together in the evenings for those co-viewing moments.

Our McDelivery Campaign had to be always on, as we were still embedding the idea that McDonald's provided takeaway (via third parties), and consistent at the key times for delivery. At launch McDelivery was available on Uber Eats only, then when we added Just Eat as a third part partner, we really needed to build this connection with our broad audience. Peak ordering of a takeaway aligns with peak TV time and key TV events, this is where we wanted to be present and have ownership. McDonald's has a wide menu, sponsorship stings afforded us the opportunity to showcase the range of products.

How the sponsorship supported the long-term media strategy

This TV sponsorship was an integral part of our overall McDelivery activity. We specifically wanted a TV partnership that would allow us to be very visible at peak order and delivery times which aligned perfectly with the entertainment package. This activity was fully integrated with Search, Social, Digital, and Audio activity that all worked seamlessly together to drive growth of McDelivery. We targeted social, search and digital (app) activity around the peak AV times for double screening, restaurants and third-party apps were also aware of the campaign so they could manage demand and flex their own media plans in tandem with ours to boost overall effectiveness of McDelivery message.

Where relevant, explain how the brand utilised advanced TV capabilities and tactics (i.e., use of first party data and insights) in order to drive results for the brand.

McDonald's undertake econometrics studies annually on all media activity and TV which was very helpful when planning our McDelivery strategy. With the launch of the TV strategy for McDelivery in 2020 all indications showed that AV was powering growth once launched, which informed us about the need for a TV Sponsorship given the impressive ROMS across the video spectrum.

According to Econometric data, we can see that AV powered the launch of McDelivery. The sponsorship sustained success and the McDonald's Econometric data showed strong returns on investment from all aspects of AV despite the higher costs vs other media hence our continued investment.

5) Client Involvement (Marked out of 10) (200 words)

Feedback from the client -

"Our McDelivery journey with Virgin Media Television has been a really interesting and exciting sponsorship to be part of. Our partnership began with the launch of McDelivery and sponsorship of I'm a Celeb in 2020 after a very turbulent year, and was then elevated to become the official sponsor of Family Entertainment which has placed the McDelivery message into the heart of people's homes, during precious co-viewing moments shared by many."

- Jennifer Power, Head of Marketing, McDonald's Ireland.





Feedback from Virgin Media Television

“Virgin Media Television is the proud home to some of the best entertainment shows on television. With an incredible line-up of fun, family entertainment shows across our schedule on Virgin Media One and Two, this sponsorship makes perfect sense for McDonald’s. The sponsorship hits the mark in connecting with viewers and delivering key family moments. We are delighted to work with Core Sponsorship and McDonalds on such a fantastic platform to deliver the McDelivery message to the masses”.

Hannah Meaney – Client Solutions Manager,
Virgin Media Solutions.