

Jane Kay selects winners in the Communiqué 2008 awards

On Thursday 10th July 2008, I attended the Communiqué Awards in London and waited with bated breath to see who'd won the coveted first place of the many awards. Even though I had judged the 'New Media' category, I didn't know who had won on the evening, so I was eagerly anticipating the result. As judges, we were asked to evaluate 14 submissions across a breadth of products and therapeutic areas; some were branded, others were driving education and consumer awareness.

Each submission contained a two page summary and any additional material to allow their work to be viewed, either online or on CD. All submissions were evaluated using eight criteria weighted towards innovation and best use of new media. The process was very interesting and illuminating.

Interesting because of the variety and breadth of programs. Some demonstrated a true grasp of the channel, how to use it to engage their customers online and deliver real value in meeting customer's objectives. There were some great Web2.0 examples and viral campaigns which really led the way for me. Flat websites are no longer 'innovative', consumers are far more sophisticated and are looking for nuggets of information in 'bite size chunks' easy to access and digest.

The process was also illuminating. Some entries showed great strategic thinking on paper, but in reality, did not deliver. I was very disappointed by the execution of some submissions, ranging from poor design and usability to lack of customer focus or lack of what it actually delivered for the customer and I wondered why this was?

Is it because clients don't know what they really need digital programs to deliver?

Is it because there are some agencies out there still grappling with what online can do for their customers and need some help?

Is it because the regulations are too restrictive and pharma can't do what it really wants to?

Or, is it all of the above?

Another theme that was common across several submissions was the mixed and varied measures used to evaluate project success.... or lack of them in some cases. How can you evaluate if your program was successful without pre-defined metrics? Then there's the interpretation of the metrics. Do you use hits or visits? Is there a difference? You bet. If you're using hits to evaluate campaigns, you're inflating your successes!

So, that leads me to who and what won the award? The New Media Award Winner went to Durexhibit by SSL International. www.durexhibit.co.uk .

This is an insight program targeted at 16-24 year olds to understand attitudes and behaviours towards sex. The website asked members to design posters that would resonate with the age group to communicate the 'safer sex' message. Using social networking on the site, peers could vote and comment on each poster until a winner was identified.

Why did it win?

It won because it demonstrated clear strategic thinking, clear objectives and measures of success. Over 600 posters were submitted against a target of 200. The concept and use of social networking completely tapped into the psyche of the target age group and delivered ideas which we now see on posters and TV.

A brilliant piece of customer focused, insightful marketing. Congratulations SSL.

In summary, it's clear that digital marketing is appearing on many more client and agency agendas demonstrated by the 14 submissions into a brand new category for Communiqué Awards. I predict this will be a growing category with more innovative suggestions next year. If you're thinking about your submission for next year, make sure you have a clear strategy, clear objectives, realistic measures of success and a program that delivers what the customer and consumer needs