

ADVERTISING MEETS TV

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Yann Arthus-Bertrand's Six Billion Others

## MORE AND MORE ADVERTISING AGENCIES ARE ADDING MIPTV AND MIPCOM TO THEIR CAMPAIGN TRAIL. WHY ARE THEY HERE? AND WHAT ARE THEY BRINGING TO THE PARTY? GARY SMITH REPORTS

**A** GLANCE at the list of the companies on the MIPWORLD website reveals an increasingly eclectic selection of companies from the technology and advertising sectors. Given the growing role played by enabling technology in the TV-watching habits of millions of viewers around the world, a strong showing by the tech sector is entirely logical. But the worlds of TV and advertising have traditionally been separated by a clear distinction in skill sets, mind-set and creative focus. Now, however, branded content — a form of content that draws on both televisual production talent and the sort of incisive brand perception and creativity that underpin great advertising — is forcing those worlds to merge.



Havas Entertainment's Fabien Baunay: "The underlying truth with both advertising and TV is that you have to have a good idea to start with"

"At root, what we are doing is building bridges between the worlds of TV and advertising," says Fabien Baunay, CEO of Havas Entertainment. "I started out in the TV industry, working for M6, so I'm familiar with that world. But now I'm producing entertainment in collaboration with brands. And the underlying truth with both advertising and TV is that you have to have a good idea to start with."

After 12 years of attending MIPTV and MIPCOM, Baunay is well aware of the need to respect certain production norms. "We offer a one-stop shop here," he says. "That means that we take responsibility for each and every stage of the value chain, from the creation of the concept to financing, production and distribution. We take a project all the way — and when we have a finished production, we have a team of people whose job it is to place that content as widely as possible. Just like a classic TV studio."

Having come from TV, Baunay fully appreciates which elements are important when it comes to bridging the gap between advertising and television. "We have recently been working with the French bank BNP Paribas on a series called Six Billion Others," he says. "The show has been produced just like any TV content and filmed by Yann Arthus-Bertrand. But the finance for it came from the bank. There's nothing overtly commercial about the series, which is very important in branded entertainment. It's one thing to have a megaphone and another thing entirely to know how to moderate the volume."

As more ad spend moves away from the classic 30-second spot and into branded content, the ways in which content is funded are changing. "I see a bright future for branded content — and I don't think we have yet realised even 10% of its potential," Baunay adds. "But even though the underlying economy of audiovisual content is changing because of more money coming from brands, ultimately our job is to make compelling content by telling great stories. And then make sure it gets maximum exposure."

Shake Content BBDO was officially launched in May 2007 as the branded-content arm of BBDO Paris.

Eileen Bastianelli, the new company's managing director, paid a visit to MIPTV 2006 with BBDO Paris' CEO, Valerie Accary. Bastianelli was surprised by the attitude of many TV producers. "The number of companies who said to us that they would be willing to place products in their shows was quite shocking," she says. "There seemed to be little or no understanding of what a sensitive process product placement is. Involving brands in a production is all about reconciling the various needs of that brand — in the same way that, when you are making a TV series, you have to make sure that it has appeal to a specific demographic."

**“Our job is to make compelling content by telling great stories”**  
Fabien Baunay

Accary continues: "We are now in an era where the frontiers between advertising, content and the internet no longer exist. Now, the most important thing is getting attention and sparking the interest of the public. More than ever, the power of the idea and the quality of the ensuing content are what matters. I firmly believe that agencies are best placed to develop branded content. But clearly, what we lack is experience in developing long-form narratives and access to experienced producers. That was why we founded Shake — we wanted to accelerate the process of creating great branded content." Bastianelli, whose CV includes a stint at the Canal+ subsidiary Chrysalide Films and consultancy work for Li-

ons Gate, Comcast, CBS, ABC, TF1 and ProSieben, believes that content quality is now the all-important factor. "When I started my career, the big issue was the privatisation of the European broadcasters," she says. "Then it was the advent of the internet — and then it was mobile TV. In the past, the overriding consideration has been content delivery, but now the main concern is the viability of that content and how to adapt it to whatever platforms it will be distributed on."

Bastianelli admits that integrating her team of TV professionals into the advertising industry's modus operandi has been an education. "Our expertise is long-form content," she says. "Initially, when we were in meetings with advertising account executives and strategic planners looking at the details of campaigns in the way that all ad agencies do, it was clear that we were from a different world. But now our area of expertise — which is basically any audiovisual content that's not a 30-second TV spot — is fully accepted as being complementary to campaigns."

Shake's work varies from viral campaigns for the French petroleum giant Total through to mood tapes for PepsiCo and creating strategic opportunities for various Masterfoods brands. "We will do anything that is good and that makes sense for the brand," Bastianelli says. "Branded content is not just about good ideas — it is also about respecting the brand. TV producers are more likely to become involved in a branded-content project through an agency looking for a concept that expresses a certain emotion than through them saying, 'Why not place your product here...'"

Ultimately, brands care most about selling more product. "That factor — and brand perception — are the



**Shake Content BBDO's Eileen Bastianelli:** "The number of companies who said to us that they would be willing to place products in their shows was quite shocking"

primary considerations of every brand and not the size of the audience," Bastianelli adds. "TV offers great ideas, scalability and exposure, but working with brands is a complicated process. We have just been doing a project with Endemol and it was a pleasure to work with a company that understands that I can't get client approvals in a matter of minutes. And contrary to the widespread perception, agencies are not cash cows. TV companies need to understand that the way into successful branded-content collaborations is through leveraging reach and applying it to the needs of the brand."

In his twin roles as managing director of TBWA/Stream in Germany and member of the board of the TV production company Weltruf TV, Stefan Kiwit is well placed to comment on the merging of brands and entertainment. "It's clear that agencies and TV producers need to talk more and find common ground," he says. "As a result, visiting MIPTV and MIPCOM is always useful in terms of getting a grip on what's being produced and for whom — especially as we are now becoming both a content producer and a content aggregator."

Kiwit has recently set up a new company called Exit-Media to specialise in branded content. "I expect to be launching our first productions around MIPCOM 2008," he says. "We, like everyone else, are in search of an audience in the broadest sense. And that target group is the classic 14- to 49-year-old demographic that was first defined by Helmut Thomas



**Valerie Accary:** "We are now in an era where the frontiers between advertising, content and the internet no longer exist"

of RTL some 15-20 years ago."

The main difference between now and then, Kiwit suggests, is that the audience has split up into 'culture groups'. "The modern audience has re-grouped around sites like YouTube," he adds. "But the problem with those sites is the lack of a filter. More clips are put up there in one second than you can watch in a day. And the fact that very soon the internet will be available on the living-room TV set will create a new kind of content bottleneck. However, it also opens up opportunities. Why not, for example, broadcast your own TV show through Skype?" In presentational terms, Kiwit is bemused by the TV industry's reliance on a sheet of A4 as the standard device for presenting a synopsis. "Honestly, I was shocked," he says. "It's not very creative just to hand someone a sheet of paper, is it? We are planning a totally different way of presenting our content — something like sending a clip to a mobile phone, so that people can view it at their convenience and also have a feedback mechanism for their reactions. Looking at the broader picture, I believe we will see a lot of changes over the next five years. There will always be the big channel brands, but financing production will be very different. And I also expect to see new forms of advertising."

Thomas Strerath, chief operating officer of Ogilvy & Mather Frankfurt, is another ad agency executive with a background in TV. Having worked at FremantleMedia in the early Nineties,

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he was a regular MIPTV and MIPCOM visitor during that period. However, the early Nineties is a long time ago in TV terms — and when Strerath took part in a MIPCOM panel last year on television's burning issues, he encountered a very different industry from the one he had left. "The biggest change I noticed was the sense of uncertainty," he says. "That contrasted strongly with the industry that I had known.

“Screens are now everywhere and they need content”  
**Thomas Strerath**

There used to be a clear business model and everyone knew what they wanted. But now, the business

models are less obvious and there is less certainty as to how to exploit the value chain. I got the impression that a lot of TV executives are not yet sure how to cope with the change.” However, Strerath was impressed by the advances in technology: “SlingTV is a fantastic invention. To be able to tap into the TV programming that you want, anywhere in the world, is an amazing thing.” Ogilvy & Mather Frankfurt is the digital agency for BMW and is also charged with creating digital platforms for DHL, Siemens and Ikea. The main concern for Strerath — and, indeed, for many executives in large agencies — is how to get the best out of the digital world. “We are all asking a lot of questions about the future,” he says. “For me, one of the biggest is how to manage our brand strategy across screens. Whether they are TV screens, computer screens or digital signage screens in shops, the fact is that screens are now everywhere and they need content. So what I’m



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Weiruf TV's Stefan Kiwit: "It's clear that agencies and TV producers need to talk more and find common ground"

looking for from the content experts in the TV industry is their ideas as to what that content should be, what forms it could take and how best to manage it.” But most worryingly, perhaps, for large agencies such as Ogilvy & Mather is the question of how to cope with the rise of the small, nimble all-digital agencies. “Within this agency, we have several job descriptions that did not

exist two years ago,” Strerath says. “Clearly, we are asking ourselves how far we should shift from the traditional agency model. The conclusion in the latest Forrester Report is that the online agencies will rapidly take over the ownership of brands, because they are very quick and agile. Obviously, that is challenging us directly. So we are also facing uncertainties.” ■



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