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## Old Spice Guy: The Campaign Your Marketing Could Look Like

by Nancy Pekala

Hello marketers. Now look at your campaign. Now back to Old Spice. Now back to your campaign. Now back to Old Spice. Sadly it isn't P&G's Old Spice campaign.

If somehow you've missed the Old Spice story, here it is in a nutshell. Last February, Procter and Gamble ran a Super Bowl ad introducing its new brand character, the Old Spice Man, played by Isaiah Mustafa, a bare-chested former NFL wide receiver who promised women he was "the man your man could smell like," even if no man could ever be as truly manly as the Old Spice Man.



Five months later, the brand's Portland-based ad agency Wieden + Kennedy posted a simple message on Old Spice's Facebook and Twitter page: "Today could be just like the other 364 days you log into Twitter, or maybe the Old Spice Man shows up [@Old Spice](#)." Thus began a two-day Old Spice YouTube Tweetathon in which the brand's team involving the actor, social media and video creatives, produced more than 180 video spots in an average of 7 minutes each, often within 30 minutes of a fan's tweet. To date, the videos have garnered more than 75 million views. (You can view the videos [here](#).)

The campaign helped stack the social media deck by having the actor respond to celebrity fans as well as traditional consumers. The Old Spice Guy responded to Ellen Degeneres when she tweeted [@TheEllenShow](#) "Have ya'll seen my friend [@IsaiahMustafa](#)'s new Old Spice commercial? So funny and so clever."

Other videos included shout-outs to such celebrities as Demi Moore, Alyssa Milano, Perez Hilton, Christina Applegate, George Stephanopoulos, tech gadget blog Gizmodo, Stanley Cup champions Chicago Blackhawks and Starbucks. The team purposefully selected fans with huge social media followings, especially those with credibility with social media influencers. Old Spice's Twitter followers increased more than 1,000 percent and nearly 600,000 people on Facebook "liked" the Old Spice ads. Ad Age reported that in the week of the viral campaign alone, the Old Spice commercials received more than 7 million views.

The campaign has generated amazing buzz and media coverage. Even Google CFO Patrick

Pichette made reference to it in the company's earnings call: "It just gives you a glimpse of where the world is going," he said.

Customer participation was key to the success of the campaign which prompted customers and non-customers alike to send in questions like, "How do I get women to stop chasing me after I use Old Spice body wash?" to which Mustafa supplied amusing answers. The Old Spice Guy even proposed marriage to a woman (who accepted) on behalf of a fan.

"In a way there's nothing magical that we've done here," Wieden + Kennedy's Global Interactive Creative Director Iain Tait, said in a recent interview with ReadWriteWeb.com. "We just brought a character to life using the social channels we all [social media geeks] use every day. But we've also taken a loved character and created new episodic content in real time."



Yet despite all its viral success, for marketers, the campaign poses this important question: Does a campaign have to sell product in order to be successful? Is it enough to measure marketing success by consumer attitudes, awareness and purchase intent or must a campaign translate into sales in order for it to be deemed a resounding success?

Commenting on the campaign in a recent [blog post](#), Forrester Senior Analyst Augie Ray noted, "We don't know if this (campaign) moved the sales or brand needle yet. The proof is in the pudding, and it ain't pudding yet. It certainly would make for an excellent social media headline if sales go up now after being off year-to-year, wouldn't it? Social media is only as good as its integration into a strategic, executable and dynamic plan."

Commenting on Ray's post, [Brian Hayashi](#), suggested that the "real Old Spice story will be about the importance of improvisation. We're starting to see that the most powerful executions of social media don't take place solely in the online milieu, but bounce between traditional media to online to the real world. Like Disney theme parks, brands will need to work within existing brand iconographies to determine the safe parameters for improvisation and then encourage their ambassadors to find safe ways to play within those boundaries."

[Dave Stubbs](#), a partner with Teehan+Lax believes the Old Spice Guy campaign is a "serious game-changer". He noted on his company's [blog](#) that the campaign is significant "not so much for the creative approach (although it does an amazing job of getting things right), but mostly for the way it illustrates the way we need to re-organize our agencies for this type of work."

[Dan Gershenson](#), a Creative Director at [The Creative Underground](#), suggests that beyond the entertainment value it offers, the campaign “helps Old Spice out of an older set of buyers and into a new, younger set of buyers.”

“The older set might not get it, but that’s OK because it’s not necessarily for them,” Gershenson noted in a recent LinkedIn [group](#) post. “Were we even talking about Old Spice back when they had a guy with an Irish accent touting their product? While this new suave gent addresses females, it’s we guys who can’t help but admire how cool he is. Yes, the big question is how this translates into sales so I think I’ll do my part to help him stick around a lot longer and pick up some Old Spice at the store tonight.”

[Bob Schouten](#), Vice President of Marketing & Sales for Executives in Action agreed that the campaign does much to revitalize the Old Spice brand. “I suspect the Old Spice brand was becoming old and not all that spicy and lacking in appeal with females who, let’s face it, have a lot of influence on the personal products their ‘man’ uses,” Schouten said. “But updating the brand’s image and appeal without doing the same for the product is like putting lipstick on a pig.”

However, he acknowledged that Old Spice deserves kudos for its effort. “If they were hoping to revitalize their brand with the younger generation, increase brand awareness, gain appeal with the female audience (as an influencer) and to do so on a relatively small budget with a strong ROI, I’m guessing that they’re feeling pretty good about this,” Schouten said. “This is just one more step in the evolution of social media as a business and marketing driver.”

Schouten added “It would be interesting to know what (if any) impact the campaign has had on brand awareness, preference and loyalty. What is the cycle time from impression to purchase? It’s possible that it might take longer for it to generate sales.”

[Lois Martin](#), President at [Lois Martin Marketing](#), noted that while creative and engaging, the campaign still belies a fundamental brand challenge—an outdated fragrance and product line.

“Sadly, with a focus on an unchanging fragrance, this product and their marketing efforts were broken from the beginning,” she said. “Since we associate Old Spice with our grandpas, it may be time for a ‘New Spice’ with the dollars and effort focused on introducing it. They may have achieved brand awareness today, but the product is still trapped in the ‘60s and ‘70s.”

Martin, after engaging in a Twitter chat about the campaign, confessed that she tested out the product in her local pharmacy via a spray from a tester card. “Old Spice, puhleeze go away. Thankfully, the spray was on a card and not on my wrist. But I still mentally smelled it for hours afterwards.”

Commenting on the issue of sales associated with the campaign, [John Behling](#), Director of Marketing Central BU at [Coca-Cola North America](#), suggested that “we have all sorts of metrics to track now, not only sales. He (Old Spice Guy) is a YouTube and PR case study. The brand awareness of Old Spice has to be increasing significantly right now. As a consumer, I love the ads and many others remember them.”

Nancy Pekala is the AMA’s Director of Online Content and Editor of Marketing Thought Leaders. Follow us on Twitter at [twitter.com/marketing\\_power](#). Submit feedback and ideas relating to the AMA’s newsletter program to [suggestions@ama.org](#).

### **Lessons Learned from the Old Spice Guy**

- 1. Create a persona that is strong and on point.**
- 2. Seed social networks with invitations to interact.**
- 3. Engage the engaged, the famous and the influencers.**
- 4. Personalize the response and people will compete for inclusion.**
- 5. Make it episodic and easy to share.**
- 6. Keep the videos simple and short.**
- 7. Promote it with tie-ins offline.**
- 8. Paid and earned integration is key to a successful social campaign.**
- 9. Adaptive marketing means you need to be flexible.**
- 10. Lose Control.**

Sources: [Augie Ray](#), Forrester Senior Analyst