



GIVE THE BIG GAME A BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER:

Content Lessons From adidas

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THE **RUNDOWN**

As the big game approaches, get a behind-the-scenes look at adidas' winning content strategy before, during, and after another major sporting event: the 2014 World Cup. Lisa Gevelber, vice president of marketing at Google, shares takeaways for brands looking to capitalize on the year's most important cultural moments.

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The Super Bowl used to be a one-day thing. Like so many families in the U.S., mine would go to a party where everyone gathered around one television screen to watch the big game—an event punctuated by iconic beer commercials and homemade guacamole. It was a one-day thing for advertisers, too: one major television spot; one opportunity to connect with your audience. Simple.

But today's audience expects something different. They want to watch and share content around events like the Super Bowl for days and even weeks before and after the actual event. And digital delivers on their expectations. In fact, in the past three years, we've seen [14X growth in worldwide search interest on YouTube for Super Bowl commercials](#) in the month of January. The internet has split big moments on big screens into hundreds of more intimate moments on more intimate devices. In response, successful marketers are expanding their digital efforts to create compelling content that cuts through the clutter before, during, and after key events.

Today, we're taking a behind-the-scenes look at how one brand—adidas—created content around 2014's biggest sporting event—the World Cup—and how the company's learnings can be applied to this year's most significant cultural moments, such as the Super Bowl.

For the World Cup, adidas created a six-episode, live-streaming series called "The Dugout," plus real-time reaction videos. Its content featured everything from world-famous footballer Q&As to post-match recaps, earning adidas the title of fastest-growing sports brand on YouTube.

Get a first look at the adidas content engine, which has driven more than 15 million visits from YouTube to the brand's website:



The adidas story offers four key learnings for brands looking to create content that will engage their audience around the moments they're most passionate about. Whether your brand is tackling a major event such as the Super Bowl or the World Cup, or looking to take ownership of more targeted moments in the 2015 calendar, these tactics will help you rise above the clutter and connect with your audience in the moments that matter.

Every good story has a beginning, middle, and end

"Real-time marketing," or marketing during an event, is just one part of the adidas success story. The before and after are equally critical. Whether events span a day (like the Super Bowl) or a month (like the World Cup), they are some of the most crowded media moments of the year. Brands like adidas can use content before an event to grab the audience's attention. Afterward, they can use it to follow up with their newly engaged audience and continue the conversation they started during the event.

adidas kicked off its World Cup sponsorship months before the first match with the launch of its "all in or nothing" campaign on YouTube. It published a drumbeat of player- and product-related content leading up to the event, including four countdown videos in the 18-day break between the European World Championship and the World Cup. During the World Cup, adidas created a multi-episode series called "The Dugout," hosting Q&As and Google+ Hangouts with favorite footballers. It used footage it had gathered before the event to edit and launch reaction videos in real time, such as its video for "The Final," which has almost 19 million views. After the final match, adidas kept up its partnership with YouTube creators such as Layla Anna-Lee and stayed in touch with new and old fans through regular content updates.

Get the before, during, and after story of "all in or nothing" directly from adidas:



Shape the content narrative with story-asking, not just storytelling

Actively inviting audiences to contribute can add relevance and authenticity to the stories brands tell. adidas designed its live-streaming episodes of “The Dugout” around audience participation, giving fans thousands of miles away an all-access pass to the World Cup. It crowdsourced questions for Q&As and Google+ Hangouts with players and scanned YouTube comments and other social channels for trending topics to ensure its videos addressed top-of-mind stories. By relying on fans to shape its content narratives, adidas guaranteed relevant, timely content that would rise above the clutter.

But adidas didn’t stop at listening. In addition to tracking real-time conversations, community managers responded to fans in YouTube comments, on Twitter, and more. They participated in conversations in both global and local markets, posting thousands of comments from the adidas handle in several languages and making their fans feel heard.

Learn more about how adidas used story-asking to shape its World Cup content:



Flip the production model from 80:20 to 20:80

One of the questions I hear most from marketers is, “How can I produce great content, faster?” The traditional marketing model was to invest 80% of the team’s effort before launching, with 20% post-launch to optimize the campaign. But in an effort to be more nimble, marketers such as adidas have turned the traditional model on its head. They’re spending 20% of their time upfront to inform big-picture creative and media decisions, reserving 80% to test and iterate in the moment.

The 20:80 model allowed adidas to take advantage of the world's best focus group: its real audience in real time. It didn't invest all of its resources in one World Cup ad produced months in advance. Instead, it took in audience feedback after posting each video and pivoted content accordingly. Its process of testing and iterating from one episode to the next helped adidas increase its views 7X from the first episode of "The Dugout" to the last.

See how adidas prepped its World Cup team to test and iterate in real time:



Lean on YouTube creators to warm up the crowd

YouTube creators are experts in making content that resonates with the YouTube audience. They know what tone to take, what topics their audiences want to discuss, and the right moments to chime in; they do so with their own following every day.

adidas chose several hosts from KICKTV, one of the most popular soccer channels on YouTube, for "The Dugout." Not only are KICKTV hosts well-respected football enthusiasts, they also brought millions of engaged YouTube fans along with them. Their knowledge of the platform, the event, and the audience, combined with their real-time video production experience, made them invaluable partners for adidas. Together, KICKTV and adidas nearly tripled subscriptions on the adidas YouTube channel during the World Cup. The content they created for the event earned over 1.5 billion impressions on YouTube.

Hear from KICKTV and adidas on how to effectively collaborate with creators:



Consumers are seeking richer, more personal experiences before, during, and after their favorite events, and they're finding them online. Brands such as adidas are taking advantage of more time with their audiences, as are the brands that will stand out during this year's Super Bowl.

Tune in on Sunday and you'll see brands continuing stories already started online, inviting fans to keep the conversation going after the game. And with good reason: [ads released on YouTube before the Super Bowl in 2014 drove 2.5X more views on average than those released on game day](#). It's no surprise people are calling it the "brand bowl" these days; branded content is quickly becoming the main event.

[Watch the complete adidas video suite here](#) and check out "[A Marketer's Playbook for Winning the Big Game](#)" for more data and inspiration.



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