

CASE STUDY

Comedy Central's Innovative Search/YouTube Strategy Sends Fans on an Internet-Wide Easter Egg Hunt

With a new host set to take over Jon Stewart's desk at the Emmy®- and Peabody Award-winning "The Daily Show," Comedy Central sensed an opportunity to capitalize on the buzz and curiosity about Trevor Noah to convert new fans. "We wanted to engage the core 'Daily Show' fans, while reaching people who were new to the show and the casual viewers," said Comedy Central's Senior Manager of Multi-Platform Marketing, Grace Low.

Comedy Central knew that the show's core audience would be curious about the new host. "Who's his girlfriend?" "Where's that accent from?" "What's his humor like?" The team also knew that now more than ever, people turn to search in their I-want-to-know [micro-moments](#).

To capitalize on people's interest in [these moments](#), Comedy Central built an innovative search campaign that would respond to key questions, surprising and delighting viewers eager to engage with the new host.

Innovative search campaign captures fans right in their moments of interest

The campaign was ingenious in its simplicity. Comedy Central identified popular search terms associated with the host and then Comedy Central's Brand Creative team collaborated with Trevor Noah and "The Daily Show" staff writers to create clever YouTube videos that addressed those search terms.

When people searched for information on, say, Trevor Noah's girlfriend, a search ad directed them to a video of Trevor Noah giving his answer.

Low said that responding to people's questions in a clever and organic way helped fans relate to Noah. "We wanted this campaign to show how Trevor, the only millennial late night host, consumes content across multiple platforms and uses Google like the rest of us."



About Comedy Central

- Available on-air, online and on-the-go, Comedy Central is the #1 brand in comedy and is owned by, and is a registered trademark of, Comedy Partners, a wholly owned unit of Viacom Inc.
- New York, New York
- www.cc.com

Goals

- Grow awareness for the new host of "The Daily Show," Trevor Noah
- Introduce Trevor Noah to the core target of young, progressive-minded news junkies
- Retain existing "Daily Show" fans and gain new, younger (and more diverse) audiences

Approach

- Google search campaign with ads matching popular search queries related to Trevor Noah
- Search ads led to YouTube videos that answered each question
- TrueView and Lightbox ads extended the reach of the content

Results

- 38M impressions, leading to 2.8M views
- Viewers watched more than 85% of each video on average
- Extensive influencer buzz

Now more than ever, people turn to search in their I-want-to-know micro-moments.

For millennials, being the first to discover and share cool content is like digital currency; this campaign really resonated with that notion. “We designed this campaign to feel authentic. People were discovering this internet-wide Easter egg hunt when they were searching about Trevor Noah,” Low said.

Once fans discovered the first video, the hunt was on.

Consumers seek out what resonates, including advertising

Fans who saw the ads quickly realized that there was a whole series of videos they could track down—and the campaign took off from there. News outlets like [Slate](#), the [A.V. Club](#), and [Uproxx](#) reported on the game and got in on the fun, looking for videos and giving readers clues. Fans on Reddit cracked the code and helped each other find all the videos.

All told, the search campaign (in conjunction with [TrueView](#) and [Lightbox](#) ads that extended the reach of the campaign) generated 38M impressions and 2.8M views. When people clicked through to the videos, they watched them. The average viewer watched more than 85% of each video, amounting to 80 days of watch-time total.

The search game was a great way for Comedy Central to connect with modern consumers who lean in and choose to engage with things that resonate.

More important, engagement rates were best among millennials, a key demographic Comedy Central had set out to reach. During Noah’s tenure as host, “The Daily Show” has seen increases in younger and multicultural audiences.

The search game was a great way for Comedy Central to connect with modern consumers in their micro-moments. Instead of being interrupted by advertising, people now can lean in and [choose to engage](#) with things that resonate. And when you’ve got thousands of fans eagerly trying to guess the keywords of your search campaign, you know you’re doing something right.



The Trevor Noah search game generated buzz across the internet.

Comedy Central entertains by using its YouTube channel as a hub for its content

Like the [53% of online video viewers](#) who watch online video to be inspired or entertained, people seek out the [Comedy Central YouTube channel](#) to have fun and to catch content they may have missed on TV. So instead of re-working content for the channel, Comedy Central sees its YouTube content as an extension of the brand. And the strategy is working: The channel currently has 4.7M subscribers.

Comedy Central also uses content from the show (instead of traditional promo spots) in its TrueView and Lightbox ads. Low shared, “Our ads are not just tune-in spots; they are shareable content. Videos that are fun and interesting make people want to engage and watch more.”

Comedy Central uses nontraditional ad lengths (3-, 7-, or even 10-minute videos) and sees great engagement and watch-time numbers.

Comedy Central wants to entertain, and with YouTube as its [content, entertainment, and engagement hub](#), entertain it does.