



ENGAGING CUSTOMERS WITH GREAT CONTENT AND SMART DISTRIBUTION

PLAY MAGAZINE

PLAY Magazine launched in 2016 as a content piece to showcase the very best of Virgin Media’s offering – from the breadth of entertainment services available to tips and tricks for getting the most as a customer.

Over the course of 10 issues, the magazine grew in popularity; transformed in look and style, and cemented its place as a key part of Virgin Media’s vision to provide added value to customers.

THE CHALLENGES

Virgin Media always believed in talking with their customers, but it became apparent that they were instead talking at them. Their communications were focused on pricing updates, so they needed to overhaul their strategy and restore customer relationships by cutting through the clutter and boxing clever – and they did just that with smart content marketing.

Virgin Media's primary content marketing objective is to drive reach and engagement with existing and acquisition customers – and this is done by;

- Stimulating customer interest in products by better supporting customers in getting the best from Virgin Media products they already have, while showcasing others;
- Strengthening Virgin Media's relationship with its customers;
- Adding value for the customer;
- And, providing this information to customers when and where they want it.



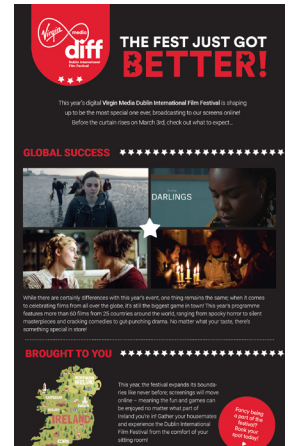


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THE SOLUTIONS

With a demonstrable demand for high-quality content, we set our sights on a groundbreaking distribution strategy. Designed to streamline processes and provide the maximum return from time and resources invested, our strategy looked to utilise a variety of channels to reimagine and reinvent existing assets, driving PLAY to the next level.

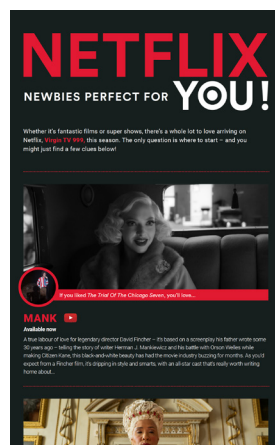
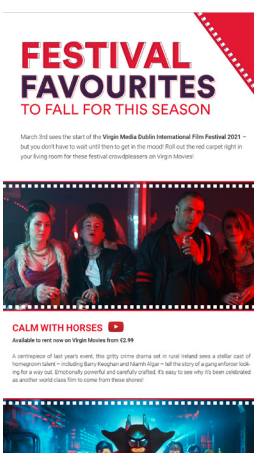
At the heart of our strategy was a commitment to content that delivered over time. Commercial objectives were joined by a focus on how every asset would be reimaged, repurposed and targeted to specific customer groups when most topical, via the best channel over its eight-week lifespan.



With a focus on careful planning and constant collaboration, our aim was to achieve greater alignment between channels, getting even more bang for our buck – and, in turn, further establishing PLAY as a vital customer retention tool in an increasingly competitive market.

From owned channels in web, social and email, to external digital display promotion (a cost-effective acquisition tool), we utilised a variety of touchpoints. A 20% increase in unique readers was an ambitious target so it was time to roll up our sleeves and get to work.

We decided to maximise the content by distributing the magazine using a number of different digital channels. This cross-platform promotion and distribution allowed customers to reconnect with the publication in a number of different ways and times during its lifespan.





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THE IMPACT

We smashed our target of 20% growth in unique readership; an increase of 100% was achieved by the first issue incorporating the new strategy, with the following issue achieving results 200% greater than observed prior to the strategy's introduction.

The results have underlined the importance of repurposing in driving traffic to PLAY;

- 38% of clicks in email newsletters were generated by repurposed PLAY content.
- Our digital display campaigns reached 4,519,571 impressions with a 15% CTR to PLAY.
- A 15% increase in product and content sales was not anticipated but observed.

It stands as a clear demonstration of how a carefully-crafted and fully-integrated approach can achieve and amplify results, raising the game of an already successful marketing tool.

Customer engagement rates have grown with 99% of readers surveyed having watched new content, shared something they read or visited Virgin's website to learn more about a product

or service after reading PLAY; satisfaction has risen, and we're continually adding value for customers with 52% of readers surveyed saying that PLAY is a great added value to being a Virgin customer.

We've done all this by being strategic about how we get PLAY content in front of our customers, ultimately helping them to do more, be more and have more fun.



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"Content Marketing is an important element of our mix and it is part of how we build the relationship we have with our customers. One of the ways we do this is through our customer magazine, PLAY. We really want customers to have the entertainment news they want and get exclusive updates that are relevant to them – all through original editorial that is delivered in a format that suits. As a result, it helps them to get the best from their Virgin Media services. Zahra Media's experience in both the consumer magazine business, as well as in content marketing, made them a super publishing partner for this project. The team at Zahra are a pleasure to work with and really get what we want to deliver through our customer communications and tone of voice. "Now on issue 18, I have to say we are thrilled with the magazine and how it has grown and progressed. It's vibrant, engaging, a great read and really brings a new dimension to how we keep the conversation going with our customers!"

**Fionnuala Tohill: Direct,
CRM and Content Marketing Manager,
Virgin Media Ireland.**

"A key component of our success over the last 3 years has been our focus on our customer communications strategy to increase advocacy and loyalty, which has resulted in significantly reduced churn, revenue growth and a 50% improvement in NPS. Our PLAY magazine has been central to this strategy putting a focus on the creation of exciting and relevant content tailored to the preferences and profiles of our customers. The partnership and relationship between our Direct Marketing & CRM and Content Marketing Team and Zahra Media Group has been a central component to the success and results outlined in our award submission. The strength of this partnership and outstanding results to date have cemented PLAY as a cornerstone in our customer communications and Virgin Media brand strategy."

**Paul Farrell, VP Of Commercial,
Virgin Media Ireland.**



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