

YouTube Works For Brands 2017

POKE - EE

THE WEMBLEY CUP 2016

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EE is the UK's youngest mobile operator but by 2016 had already managed to become no.2 in preference among younger, data-hungry UK customers. However, it was still trailing behind O2, the long time category incumbent.

EE's ambition was to become the preferred operator for young, 4G-hungry Brits.

We set out to find how to better connect with a generation that got its thrills from surfing the web on their mobile, and quickly landed on a simple reality: they loved football and YouTube. Armed with that insight, we developed an 8 episode YouTube series, bringing together the platform's most famous gaming influencers and real life legends of the sport. The series chronicled the building of two teams that would face-off in an epic game played at Wembley Stadium and live streamed on YouTube.

The series received over 40 million views and the live final attracted over 1.5 million views just on the night. EE saw a 36% increase in brand search terms following the campaign, recorded a 7.8% increase in brand recall, and a 6.3% increase in brand favourability.

Finally, among audiences exposed to the episodes, EE was able to overtake O2 in preference for the first time since its creation.

ENTRY

The challenge

Formed in 2012, EE is the UK's youngest mobile network operator. Since its creation, and with a brand promise focused on 4G speeds, EE has managed to overtake more traditional competitors like Vodafone (est. 2003) and Three (est. 2006) to become no. 2 in preference among young, data-hungry UK customers.

But by 2016, EE was still trailing behind O2, the long time category incumbent. EE's ambition was to become the preferred operator for young, 4G-hungry Brits. We needed to beat O2 and become the stated

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first choice for these high-potential consumers.

The insight

In the search to find a new way to connect with an audience that spent more and more time outside of the scope of traditional advertising, we found that football and gaming ranked amongst their primary interests. They were not influenced by TV ads, and spent most of their time interacting with content on mobile through platforms like YouTube, Facebook or Snapchat. YouTube in particular revealed itself as the primary destination for mobile video and sports content consumption. For our core audience, YouTube was seen as the home of football catch-up, and their insatiable appetite for football content was being satisfied by YouTube influencer-made content showcasing e-sport (FIFA) skills, tricks, commentary and general football banter.

These YouTube creators were becoming the go-to for football content and, most importantly, for the people we wanted to engage.

The idea

We knew that brands using YouTube influencers was not a new thing, but rather than simply paying them for standalone product demos or reviews (product placement) in a way that has become commonplace, our ambition was to collaborate with influencers to create story-led content, hosted on their YouTube channels rather than EE's own channels.

The result of this collaboration was the Wembley Cup, an 8-episode YouTube series presented by Spencer Owen, culminating in a live match played at Wembley Stadium and streamed live on YouTube. EE's existing partnership with Wembley Stadium was instrumental in building a persuasive narrative and making this an epic project, as was the addition of a new partnership with EA, publisher of the popular video game series FIFA.

[Watch the series here

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZrL1DTZoLW4&list=PL0HlljXDx5yl44jOMTkjJaum9ut0BvRID>

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The premise of the series was the formation of two teams of influencers that would face off at Wembley stadium in front of a crowd of fans.

YouTube influencers Spencer Owen and Joe Weller were appointed team captains of Spencer FC and Weller Wanderers, and given the task of building their squads in preparation for the grand final.

Episode one kicked off with both captains assembling a core team of 6 YouTube creators each, to join them on the journey to the final, and help recruit new players along the way. For the bulk of the series, Spencer FC and Weller Wanderers then battled it out in football related challenges to add EA FIFA 2017 legends such as Robbie Fowler, Robert Pires, Peter Schmeichel, Patrick Kluivert, Jay-Jay Okocha and Jamie Carragher to their ranks.

To engage the YouTuber's communities, we also made sure that the format was honed to enable fans to participate in the decision-making. The team that won a challenge could pick an EA legend, but it was the fan communities that decided what Youtube influencer got to join the losing team through a public vote.

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All YouTubers who were invited to play were asked to reveal their involvement in The Wembley Cup through bespoke videos posted on their own channels, thus increasing the reach of our message.

Finally, the completed teams played on Wembley in front of an audience of 20,000 fans, and the game was live streamed on YouTube and later made available on Spencer FC's channel for viewing.

From a paid media perspective, using traditional channels and methods to achieve broad reach among this group effectively is increasingly difficult and expensive. With that knowledge, we activated paid support in social and digital channels only. We were able to optimise against our sweet-spot audience right out of the gate, using an existing prospecting pool (12m cookies) for sizeable EE retargeting opportunities. Formats were optimized to meet audience expectations; we retargeted with trailers on YouTube, but with full episodes on other platforms to ensure that wider audiences had the chance to view the content. Our bet on long form retargeted content paid off as all media KPIs (views, view length, engagements) were met or exceeded.

What we did differently

EE's approach to building the Wembley Cup relied on working closely with influencers, YouTube, media and creative.

We wanted to champion the YouTubers and their communities and have them sharing the stage with the football legends. The Wembley Cup bridged generations, digital and analogue, football and e-sport, in one epic sporting event attended by thousands and watched by millions.

The results

REACH

The web series gathered more than 40 million views. The final raked in 3.8 mil views, with 1.5 million views live on the night, rivalling many premier league matches (top BT Sport football broadcast in 2016 was 1.3m viewers)

The live final saw 20,000 people in attendance at Wembley, with enthusiasm for the show peaking on Twitter conversations and in YouTube comments.

ENGAGEMENT

Audiences on Youtube were incredibly engaged, with over half a million likes and more than 350,000 comments on the content, with sentiment overwhelmingly positive throughout the series.

BRAND IMPACT

We recorded 36% increase in brand terms searches following the campaign, and a 10x increase in searches of the Wembley Cup itself.

Our brand uplift surveys showed a 7.8% increase in brand recall, and a 6.3% increase in brand favourability.

PAID MEDIA

Our targeted and experimental use of paid media strategies meant that 7m of 21m YouTube views (as of October 2016) could be directly attributed to paid media (+10% above benchmark); for the live final 74% of 1.5m live stream viewers were attributed to paid media.

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THE BIG WIN

The Wembley Cup made it into the YouTube ads leaderboard, and, for the first time in 6 years, EE was no. 1 in preference against O2 amongst young, 4G hungry Brits.

SUPPORTING INFO

Video case study: <https://youtu.be/F-YeP4JFjDQ>

Web series:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZrL1DTZoLW4&list=PL0HljXDx5yl44jOMTkjJaum9ut0BvRID>