

## Safeguarding your brand in a cross-media world

The concept of “brand” has been with us for millennia. The word “brand” is derived from the Old Norse word “brandr” which translates to “burn”. This reflects the Norse practice of burning a mark onto either livestock or products. The oldest UK brand, according to Guinness World Records, is Lyle’s Golden Syrup with its familiar Green and Gold packaging dating back to 1885. However, whilst the concept isn’t new, the importance to businesses, large and small, of nurturing and protecting their own brand has never been greater. Add in to the mix the explosion in cross-media marketing and you have a challenge that keeps many a brand manager awake at night.

Cross-media marketing has revolutionised how brands communicate with their target audiences. Messages can be delivered simultaneously across numerous channels to the same group of consumers with the potential to create a surge of awareness and interest that feeds the organisations sales pipeline. This is where the brand safeguarding challenge begins. Brand messages are being delivered across multiple media and by multiple partners. It is fairly straightforward to enforce brand guidelines within your own website or email blasts but it gets progressively harder the longer the chain of communication becomes. Like a game of Chinese Whispers, instructions can be misunderstood, colours mismatched, logos squished by unexpected banner formats. And with so many channels being utilised the challenge of keeping on top of it all is immense.

Immense, though, is also how best to describe the risk to your brand of getting this wrong. Brand equity takes a long time to establish but can be lost in an instant. Consumers are increasingly brand savvy and quickly spot if a brand message or appearance has been skewed. If consumers are spending time trying to work out why the banner ad they were just served looks a bit wrong then they are not absorbing the message it was intended to convey and the campaign objectives are compromised. Consumers are also increasingly aware of the dangers around both counterfeiting and phishing. A slightly misaligned brand, an off kilter logo, a blue that is just a bit too dark can all act as warning signs to consumers that all is not what it should be. Long developed trust in the brand is compromised and, instead of receiving the intended message, the consumer begins to disengage with the brand.

Cognitive dissonance in marketing occurs when a consumer holds conflicting views about a product or service. A key driver of this is brand inconsistency and a primary result of this state of mind occurring is that the consumer will switch brands. Clearly something to be avoided. Your brand should be driving your sales not hindering them. How can you best safeguard your brand in a cross-media world?

At Datum, we believe the best way for our clients to safeguard their brands is to keep everything under one creative roof. Considering the risks outlined above, we believe that, as cross-media producers, we are the guardians of our client’s brand. We can act as a single repository for all our clients’ brand assets, securely storing them in the most up to date formats. Updates are quick and easy as we only need to replace or amend client assets once. When third party media companies are delivering the content we work closely with them to ensure guidelines are adhered to and that we deliver the assets exactly as required. Our account handlers work under the same roof as our creatives and all work is cross-checked to ensure consistency in appearance and messaging.

The primary benefit is that, through consistency and safeguarding, your brand grows in value and positively assists in communicating your messages to your audience. The “one roof” approach can also deliver secondary benefits such as workflow efficiencies. Clients are able to strip out agency management resource and campaigns can be conceived and delivered to market quicker than in a multi-agency environment.

Datum offers a broad portfolio of cross-media products and services. We have long established ourselves as a helpful, hands-on partner to our clients. Our clients often still have their own “Brand Cop” to ensure compliance. At Datum we are there as an extra pair of hands in policing your brand – to borrow some branding from the Los Angeles PD – “To protect & serve”.

To find out more about how we can help you safeguard your brand whilst delivering cross-media marketing campaigns drop us a line at 01707 251222 or info@datumcp.com

<http://www.datumcp.com/safeguarding-your-brand-in-a-cross-media-world>