

COLUMNS

Mobile's complementary role to TV in sporting events

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By **Marcus Startzel**

The wait is over. With the Ravens and Broncos kicking things off last night, the 2013 NFL season is officially upon us. This huge event was not only the beginning of a five-month journey for players and fans, but it also marks the beginning of "game time" for advertisers who look to America's new national pastime to drive business.

Kick off

For verticals such as consumer packaged goods, each Sunday presents a chance to drive direct purchases that will immediately move the needle, and for verticals including automotive or finance, advertisers have noticed that there are few better times to reach a large group of engaged consumers than during NFL Sundays.

One of the main trends we are noticing going into the football season is that we are no longer having to convince brands of the importance of mobile.

More so than other sports, football lends itself naturally to interacting with a second screen.

Since the majority of games are played in just two time slots during the day, consumers are often on their phones or tablets checking in on other games.

Thanks to the massive popularity of fantasy football, many consumers are looking for instant information on what is happening with specific players that just is not available on television.

Football also tends to be more of a social experience than other sports, so many consumers are watching games either at a friend's house or bar/restaurant or in the stadium, which means their phone may be the only screen that they are actually in complete control of, leading to increased usage.

Game face

Advertisers are seeing these trends first hand and they are noticing them and, as a result we are seeing incredibly creative approaches on how they engage consumers via mobile. These creative approaches usually fall into two buckets:

1. Ads that take advantage of consumers multitasking. According to Nielsen, more than one-third of tablets owners check sports scores on their devices while watching TV, and this is just one example of how consumers multitask.

Whether a brand wants to create a co-watching experience, amplify existing TV commercials they may be running, or anything in between, if it can make its ad naturally fit into the multitasking experience, chances are the brand will see success.

2. Ads that embrace the aspects of mobile that make it unique. Mobile is different from all other forms of advertising.

...that embrace the aspect of mobile that make it unique: mobile is different from all other forms of advertising, both in terms of the device itself, and where and how consumers use them.

The most effective campaigns often occur when advertisers can identify these differences in the planning stages of their campaign and come up with a unique way to leverage them.

As we talk about the NFL season, I would also be remiss if I did not mention the largest day of the year for advertisers: the Super Bowl. USA Today recently reported that 85 percent of TV ads for the game are already sold, and it is not too early to act for mobile, either.

Mobile is a medium that can amplify, complement or even replace TV spend, and if last year's Super Bowl told us anything, it is that the role of mobile is increasing every year. We certainly expect that to be the case this year as well. Game on.

Marcus Startzel is chief revenue officer of [Millennial Media](#), Baltimore, MD. Reach him at marcus@millennialmedia.com.

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