



WINDOWS 8 GLOBAL LAUNCH CAMPAIGN

Business Situation and Campaign Objectives:

Windows 8 was the most important launch in the history of Microsoft. This critical launch occurred in a far more complex and competitive environment than we had faced with any previous Windows release. The computing category has widened substantially with the rise of tablets and mobile computing, making the launch environment particularly daunting given our focus on selling an ingredient—the operating system. Moreover, Microsoft's dependence on other companies that make our devices: Samsung, HP, Dell complicated our message, especially because device desire would ultimately drive purchase far more than the OS could do. So Windows 8 marked the introduction of a new era of no-compromise devices and no-compromise experiences across PC, tablet and introduced convertible devices to the marketplace—and a new research challenge for our team.

The Windows 8 launch was fueled by a remarkable ad campaign; the broadest in Microsoft's history, running in 42 countries across the world, with creative that was customized to region and media plans that were locally tailored. To match this scale, we had the broadest research agenda of any past campaign, necessitated by the amount of spend per market and our belief that we could make substantial in-fight changes to improve performance. Beyond the company needing to understand if the money was well spent, the number of countries where media spend was high enough to warrant creative and media optimization research scaled our country coverage from 7 to 20! To drive optimization actions, speed to insights would be key. The pure pace and scale of this effort made us find new, innovative, scalable ways to make the best decisions possible across the globe. **The results of this research impacted hundreds of millions of dollars of media and creative investment in 42 countries. The total ROI of the research commissioned was more than 20x the cost, calculated in terms of additional effectiveness of each dollar spent in media (consider them akin to earned impressions), compared to initial plan, driven by decisions made directly because of the research.** This ROI model was approved by our internal media and finance partners, and the ROI is published across our organization.

The goal of the campaign was to get consumers to lean forward and want to learn more, to desire Windows 8, its hardware and its apps. In order to drive business success for Windows 8 during the launch period and within an environment where consumers feel favorably about its predecessor Windows 7, the campaign objective was to encourage consumers to begin to consider Windows 8 for their next computer or tablet purchase. The idea is to motivate consumers who are early adopters of technology to not only consider Windows 8, but to also influence their peers to do so as well.

To introduce this new era, our campaign focused on 4 key strategies:

- 1) **Showcase Windows 8 magic moments.** Consumers must say “WOW” I want to check that out - things like Picture Password, Multitask, and a personalized start page with live tiles are what ‘wows’ people.
- 2) **Romance the new form factors and devices.** Windows has the most innovation from Hardware partners since the introduction of the mobile laptop. Thin, light, longer battery, awesome new form factors that do Yoga moves, convert, touch, and more all wrapped up in new industrial designs and materials that are beautiful.
- 3) **Present a new app platform that does things no other app platform can do.** We showed these capabilities in ways that also make consumers lean forward and say “I’ve never seen that, I want to do that”, things like Live tiles on your start page, Multitasking, Search/sharing within an app, across apps, all without leaving the app.
- 4) **Drive word of mouth.** The target audience for the Windows 8 campaign was specifically designed to build positive Word of Mouth for Windows 8. The word of mouth strategy is predicated on this principle: There are people who talk and tell/influence other people about new things. Three out of 10 consumers are influencers, and they tend to impact 12 people per month. With our campaign we’re tapping into the things that make those influencers excited, their personal passions.

Research Story:

The scale of the Windows 8 launch campaign demanded tactical, decision-oriented research conducted on an entirely new level, pushing the boundaries of pre-testing and cross-channel optimization to a global platform. Two primary challenges had to be grappled with:

- Research had to cover an unprecedented number of markets globally; 42 countries, 20 of which had campaign spend levels which demanded both pre-testing and in-market optimization research.
- Every market had a customized media mix, demanding research that informed channel optimization by market. No longer was monthly accountability research enough. Nor was TV-only optimization with partners like Nielsen. This research had to be scalable to as many markets as possible and cover channels not previously measured, especially relative to other channels in a way that would drive investment decisions. In most markets, we measured the unique and combined effectiveness of TV, standard digital banners, rich media, digital video, homepage takeovers, stunts/events, static OOH, digital OOH, print and several local custom media placements.

From these objectives, the Windows 8 campaign research team developed two innovative methodologies for optimizing for media weight, media placement and creative rotation in 20 key countries. Each innovation effort drove critical insights:

- 1) A **Global Pre-Testing Engine** predicted effectiveness of advertising in-market across 20 markets. This pretesting drove both editing of spots, but also the spot selection per country.
- 2) Once the campaign was launched, **Globally-Scaled In-Market Optimization** allowed tactical decisions to be made during the campaign including creative rotation and channel investment decisions.

These methods drove major decisions at critical junctures of the campaign:

1. The **Global Pre-Testing Engine** predicted effectiveness of advertising in-market across 20 markets. We utilized 3 separate creative agencies to design three regional bodies of work. Via pretesting, we determined that advertisements intended for one region could perform as well, or better, in other regions not intended to run. **This pretesting drove both editing of spots, but also the spot selection per country, choosing from a global arsenal, rather than regional.**
 - a. The Windows 8 research team worked with Penn, Schoen & Berland (PSB) to develop a pretesting engine that would rapidly test each piece of creative against the key metrics in order to predict ad effectiveness on campaign goal metrics and breakthrough.
 - i. The pretesting research tested each ad across globally representative markets.
 - ii. One major advancement of this research was the speed at which real-time research and decisions were made. The Pretesting Engine created allowed a 3 day-turn around for major decisions in the US, and a 4-day turnaround internationally. Pretesting was conducted over 2-3 days for any given ad, with real-time decision made on day 3 or 4.
 - iii. Once the campaign was in-market, the pretesting engine was again used to quickly assess new ads which were edited or created once the campaign had already begun. This ability to have new or edited ads tested to support creative decisions within a week's time further supported campaign optimization and effectiveness.
 - b. **Major Impact:** The key learning from the pretesting research was that global assumptions needed refinement. The results of this research revealed that some ads created to align with specific markets in fact performed poorly in the intended markets, while other ads created for other markets performed much better. Beyond identifying more powerful spots per market, we also opened up an arsenal of creative to choose from, reducing the amount of new creative that would need to be produced later in the year. Additionally, a CHAID analysis was done post-launch to build a fact-book of what worked creatively and what did not to help drive next-round creative development.
2. Once the campaign was launched, **Globally-Scaled In-Market Optimization** allowed tactical decisions to be made during the campaign.
 - a. For In-Market Optimization, Microsoft partnered with GfK and ComScore to develop a research instrument that could provide channel and creative-level optimization traditionally provided only in the US and UK by Nielsen IAG.
 - i. Research at this scale presented several challenges: localized creative had to be immediately operationalized into the research tool, local market differences in creative selection, media mix, and market realities had to be taken into account, sampling difficulties in emerging markets had to be accommodated, critical timelines and scale required highly efficient (and often automated) reporting processes posed significant hurdles.
 - b. A methodology was developed and scaled to 20 countries globally that used perceptual data to optimize television creative rotation, channel mix, genres of TV, websites, print publications, and outdoor locations that were most effective in reaching the target and impacting their perceptions.
 - c. **Major Impact:** the results of this research modified media rotation and mix decisions across 20 markets to drive greater business impact from each media dollar spent.

These two research initiatives impacted hundreds of millions of dollars of media and creative investment in 42 countries. The total ROI of the research commissioned was more than 20x the cost, calculated in terms of additional effectiveness of each dollar spent in media (consider them akin to earned impressions), compared to initial plan, driven by decisions made directly because of the research. This ROI model was approved by our internal media and finance partners, and the ROI is published across our organization.

Campaign Description:

The Windows 8 campaign began in October of 2012, in alignment with the product launch, in 42 markets across the globe. Within each market, the campaign targeted those who tend to be early adopters of technology, use technology primarily for social purposes, and those who use technology to make their lives more productive and efficient. In order to reach these targets the media plan took a comprehensive approach, with a wide variety of channels including TV, print, digital, custom integrations, out of home executions, events, and cinema advertising, and the creative approach focused on the key value propositions of Windows 8. The campaign will run through May of 2013 in alignment with the original media and creative plans, with adjustments and optimizations being made based on the results of the optimization studies the research team is executing.

Business Results:

Windows 8 was launched into a far more complex competitive environment than any Windows release in history; the category has widened substantially with the rise of tablets and mobile computing. **The Windows 8 campaign and other launch efforts have driven the sale of 70 million copies of Windows 8 in less than 4 months.** This is equivalent to sales of Windows 7 at this point in its launch, which was done in a far less competitive environment.

Pre-testing and In-Market Optimization research is estimated to have netted increases in media effectiveness of approximately \$200 Million and represents a greater than 20x ROI on research commissioned. And we continue to reap value from the massive amount of data at our disposal from this continuous and scaled methodology. From here, we're using this data in marketing mix modeling to drive investment decisions for next year's holiday selling season.