

The investment perspective

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The World Cup is a massive event, not only for the players and supporters but also for the marketing and media business.

From a sporting point of view, it's 2014's pre-eminent opportunity to reach mass audiences consuming content that is likely to be the main conversation driver for a huge swath of the population.

For media owners, the audiences will be large and valuable: ESPN will see sharp spikes in ratings among hard-to-reach, valuable, young/upmarket male audiences.

And the benefits aren't confined to the broadcasters - we expect newspaper circulations to rise substantially, by 20% to 30% at times, along with traffic to websites with World Cup content.

While there will be a leap in male audiences during the tournament, it's important to put this in perspective. Quite simply, soccer has changed.

The male-only enclave is no more and soccer is developing genuinely mass appeal.

Nowhere is this more obvious than in the TV viewing figures. Some 45% of the UK audience watching the 2010 World Cup Final were female, and we believe the gender gap in this year's tournament will narrow yet again.

So we've got an event that has broad appeal and will deliver a big audience. A pretty straightforward media planning exercise, right? Well, only if you just want to slap a logo on the content or stick an advertising message next to it and hope for the best.

There's one major difference that will make this World Cup a different planning challenge than the tournaments that have preceded it: the proliferation of consumer technology that has changed behavior. Consumers will want World Cup content at their fingertips and are comfortable consuming it through multiple platforms, often simultaneously (with second screening as the most obvious example).

In order for our clients to get the most value out of their spend around the tournament, it's crucial we take a holistic view: that we don't see the opportunity as a series of media opportunities that are planned and bought in isolation. We use systems thinking to look at the event from a consumer/customer point of view and plan our communications so that all elements support each other and the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

Buying a :30 spot still has tremendous resonance, but now it's just the beginning of the story. The more personal, on-demand nature of viewing changes the way we plan. A rating isn't necessarily a rating anymore, and the size of a TV program is no longer simply judged on its delivery but on its wider impact in the social world, and delivery against social traction or delayed viewing. For the World Cup, we'll be asking questions such as: "What conversations could this :30 spot spark?" "Where will the consumer go next?" "How do we reinforce the message?" "Can we entice consumers to spend more time interacting with our brand?" It's in the potential of these subsequent interactions that the ripple effect of buying traditional media is harnessed and value can be created. Furthermore, as real-time planning becomes a reality, we can adjust media and title mix to drive further efficiencies based on how consumers are behaving.

A connected World Cup offers a plethora of planning and buying opportunities, but - at its heart - we must ensure that all the communication strands lead back to the brand. Too often, technology becomes the hero, and the temptation to innovate for the sake of innovation takes over. That's wrong. It's about the brand, not the platform. The proliferation of devices and precision of the data enable genuinely platform-neutral implementation. Of course, this fact provides both opportunities and threats for the media owner. As a result, their behavior is changing, just as the consumer's has changed. A national newspaper isn't just competing against other national newspapers for revenue any more; it's up against Univision or ESPN or Google or talkSPORT or MSN, i.e., anyone who can provide the relevant content consumers demand.

The 2014 World cup is going to see a seismic shift in our planning behavior. Virtually every day, there will be opportunities to interact with large, engaged,

content- hungry audiences. Add in the multi-screen and cross-media opportunities and this is exciting ground, full of opportunities to drive engagement and brand love.

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