

# Warc releases Effective Content Strategy Report 2018

Warc has released its Effective Content Strategy Report 2018, outlining key content marketing themes from the world's most effective campaigns.

Drawn from the winners of the Effective Content Strategy category of this year's international Warc Awards, a global search for next-generation marketing effectiveness, the report identifies common themes from branded editorial-style content that can demonstrate a business outcome.

## Palpable enthusiasm for content

Warc's Lucy Aitken, managing editor, case studies, says: "Despite the stumbling blocks in encouraging advertisers to experiment with new content formats and try something that perhaps doesn't look like advertising of old, there is a palpable enthusiasm for content.

"Content is starting to take a more central role in communications strategies that recognise its strengths and its power to connect."

Following Warc's analysis of the metadata of the entries, together with an entrants' survey and contributions from the eminent judging panel chaired by John Dokes, global chief marketing officer and general manager, AccuWeather New York, four key themes have been identified around Effective Content Strategy:



Jury member Lennie Stern, head of creative and entertainment strategies, BETC Paris. Image supplied.

## Humour as an effective content strategy

Emotion and humour were the creative strategies of nearly a third (32%) of shortlisted papers in the Effective Content Strategy category at this year's Warc Awards.

The Grand Prix winner, Coca-Cola's Hijacking the African Cup by FP7/Cairo, showed how emotion and humour could successfully engage audiences, as did Whiskas' Kitten Kollege by AMVBBDO and Malaysian telco Maxis' 4G Films by Ensemble Worldwide and Initiative Malaysia.

Jury member Lennie Stern, head of creative and entertainment strategies, BETC Paris says: "Creating emotion is what brands have to do today. Make them laugh and you'll encourage them to share new cultural references."

## Content must scale up to reach its full potential

In a survey by Warc asking entrants into the Effective Content Strategy category whether their clients will be investing in more branded content in the future, 89% agreed that they would. Given that brands are committing more to the benefits of content, budgets need to grow to ensure that it can be consistent over time and deliver on marketing objectives.

Judge Nick Kendall, founding partner, Broken, Electric Glue and The Garage Soho, comments: "Scaling, and scaling hard behind proven success, is the new business practice. Now content is growing up and finding 'the power of ideas'. So, let's make sure we have 'the power of media' to drive them."

## Content that creates a point of difference

Telcos, particularly those in the MENA region, where countries such as the UAE and Saudi Arabia boast some of the highest smartphone penetration in the world, are increasingly dependent on content marketing to help differentiate in a highly commoditised sector.

There are lessons here for marketers in sectors such as financial services where differentiation remains one of the biggest challenges.

Daniel Shepherd, director, digital planning, PHD UAE, says: "Showing is better than telling to get into consumers' hands and hearts. In a sea of sameness, littered by the debris of countless boastful claims, content makes impressive waves and ripples that last."

## **Content that engages new audiences**

Nearly half (44%) of entrants surveyed by Warc cited new customer acquisition as a key objective of their content marketing. And many winning campaigns successfully reached new audiences.

U.S. dating app Hinge by the Studio repositioned itself as a relationship app through an animated film, inviting people to Escape the Dating Apocalypse and doubled its user base. Meanwhile, Emirates NBD's Dear Younger Me by Momentum Egypt increased youth acquisitions through branded content that engaged emotionally with Egypt's under-25s.

Jury member Aliya Hasan, head of strategy, Vizeum Australia, comments: "Content can provide an accessible platform for new audiences to experience brands that might have been previously unfamiliar. It can often be more trusted and disarming than traditional advertising.

"Put simply, content done well, does well. It can truly be a powerful weapon in a marketer's arsenal when wielded skilfully."

A sample of Warc's Effective Content Strategy Report 2018 can be downloaded [here](#). The report in full is available to Warc subscribers and includes chapter analysis with views and opinions from the judges, as well as summaries - objectives, insights, strategies, results and take-outs - of the winning case studies.

Now in their third year, the Warc Awards 2019 will open for entries on 1 November 2018. Free to enter, there is a \$40,000 prize fund for the winning papers. View [here](#) for more information.

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