



Mixing it up in multi-media

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1 \ Nikki Streater and Nick Lower of Satellite Media find the boundaries between modern media are dissolving.

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Interactive touch screens, websites, television, magazines online and in print – they’re all within the orbit of Satellite Media. Director Nick Lowe and general manager Nikki Streater talk about mixed-media and diversity within a single business.

Q. How difficult is it to maintain focus on interactive, television and print all at the same time?

A. Nowadays the lines are becoming increasingly blurred between the media... our magazines live online, our TV production gets played out on mobile and our websites get promoted outdoors! The key for us has been to not limit ourselves to any boundaries when we approach a project. The glue that holds it together is content and the focus is on producing quality design to house that content – no matter what the media.

Q. How well do your designers move between these disciplines?

A. Some designers like the variety of moving between disciplines, others like to focus or specialise – we need both! The ones who move between carry a special ability to create visually impacting material no matter what the medium, and understand the unique characteristics of each media.

Good design is good design no matter how you view it, but what works online doesn’t necessarily work in print. So they have to know the difference and we believe that comes back to a solid understanding of traditional communication theories and insight into consumer behaviour.

Q. How can people develop multimedia skills and keep up with changing market demands?

A. While being in the interactive business, we have seen nothing last for very long – and that includes how we go about creating things! I don’t think you ever develop multimedia skills in one go. You learn something about communication – whether that’s photography, animation, illustration, copywriting, motion graphics, video – and when it comes to multimedia you realise you can play with all at the same time. So you start with what skills you have and then you keep adding to it. Steel sharpens steel. To us, keeping in touch with like-minded people has always been the best way to advance our abilities; you can’t beat sharing experience and learning.

Q. You have developed products for interactive in retail. Do you see this as the way to shop in the future?

A. We are firm believers that, while the internet is great for shopping for some stuff, you can never beat getting out and about and touching and feeling stuff before you buy it. At Satellite we’ve set a new focus on producing interactive content solutions for retail where we add either information or entertainment to the retail experience to support the sales process. So much of retail is based on print, but it’s hard for many companies to control their presence across a major chain. Costs of technology are now more realistic to allow us to deliver touch screen solutions that let the content experience in stores be more effective.

Q. With mixed media and technology merging, do you have any five-year revolutionary visions?

A. We see content and design being the business. No matter how consumers want to consume or engage with media / entertainment – whether it’s online, via their TV, mobile phone, out and about... it’s all the same to us and that’s the way it should be. Increasingly that’s the way consumers are behaving. We need to stop thinking in terms of “that’s a newspaper” or “that’s a magazine” and think in terms of brands / content / design, which lives in multiple touch points. pd