

Cabot's combines cutting edge digital with creative

Evolving technology continues to drive innovation in the ad industry with some - but not many - leading agencies providing cutting edge campaigns combining the best of digital with creative advertising.

Nowhere is this more evident than a recent campaign application rolled out for timber decking business Cabot's with its latest deck staining application.

Cabot's Decking Forecaster app. combines the Bureau of Meteorology's daily temperature, humidity and wind data built into the algorithms to help customers plan the ideal day and time for staining decks in a step by step process based on a six-day forecast depending on where you live anywhere in Australia.

Options start with choosing the project whether it is re-coating a deck or a new bare deck. If the conditions are right it then provides details of how to prepare, clean and apply the first and second coats.

Cabot's also provides a guide to using the right product and how to go about staining your deck if you are new to it.

The agency behind the campaign is Melbourne creative and digital agency HBK. According to co-owner David Hayes there are some agencies successfully combining the two mediums of digital and creative but not many.

"A lot of creative agencies are doing digital work and digital agencies trying to offer creative work but they don't know much about it," he says.

"In most cases creative agencies pay lip service to digital. And the digital agencies, when they offer creative work, don't really know what they are doing." HBK has successfully used a combination of digital and creative advertising for several years now since bringing digital specialist Luke Kelly into the agency.

"Over the years we saw quite a few digital agencies present to our clients", said Hayes.

"They were often selling technology and expertise irrespective of whether it was appropriate for what the client really needed – and of course, in that situation, the client doesn't know. We've seen quite bit of that," he said.

According to Mr. Kelly the idea for the Cabot's decking forecast app came when the subject of the weather came up in the context of a conversation about decking.

:"And I thought surely we can marry up real time forecasts and data to do something that is usable that is going to give us an equation to say when it's ideal to be doing your deck.

"That's the beauty of being able to have both these kind of teams (creative and digital) working together.

"It shows the power of being able to digest what we're trying to say from a communications standpoint and then understanding the technical possibilities.

"It's not just about tech; the way digital departments should be run or the framework. That's part of it. It's more about how we are going to bring consumers in; what's going to steer them to the best possible outcome for us.

"All the marketing activity then has to flow from what's been built. But all that has to be thought about at the planning stages, not at the end.

"That's a big conversation not a lot of tech teams like having. They just want to build. That's fine ... but you need to be thinking about what want people to do and how you're going to market to them to make it useful.

"We make sure our tech team is constantly testing new frameworks and technology because things go stale pretty quickly in our world," Mr. Kelly says.

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