

# Carphone Warehouse uses an integrated Google advertising approach to reveal insights about mobile’s powerful “ripple effect”



## At a Glance

### Goals

- Raise awareness and drive users to Best Buy’s m-commerce site
- Build traffic and increase clicks across all platforms
- Test mobile’s impact in establishing brand cut-through

## Approach

- Launched a series of YouTube roadblocks on mobile
- Implemented existing TV ads as pre-rolls on YouTube
- Ran display advertising on the AdMob network
- Adopted an experimental framework, with the intent to roll learnings into the bigger Carphone Warehouse UK brand

## Results

- Increased desktop CTR 45%, tablet CTR 30% and mobile CTR 29%
- Grew mobile traffic 37% week-on-week following YouTube takeover
- Gained valuable understanding about building a brand via mobile

## Background

Best Buy UK, a joint venture between Best Buy Inc and Carphone Warehouse Group, launched a fully transactional mobile website in the second half of 2011. Because Best Buy possessed low levels of pre-existing awareness in the UK, the opportunity provided an exceptional test case for exploring how mobile advertising can help contribute to building a brand from scratch. The plans for Best Buy subsequently changed but the lessons learnt on mobile advertising are valuable for Carphone Warehouse’s ongoing activities.

## Down to a science

Gareth Jones, head of online marketing for Carphone Warehouse, explains the objectives. “Firstly, we’d built this really fantastic transactional experience on a mobile site and we wanted to announce and build awareness of that.” The Best Buy m-commerce destination offered all the capabilities of the desktop site; a visitor could browse, check local stock availability, and reserve and collect products ranging from fridges to hairdryers. “The second objective was to test the ability to sell products on a mobile device, so there was a performance element to the campaign,” he continues. “And then the final objective was we were very keen to test, learn and experiment, so that we could replicate the successes for Carphone Warehouse.”

Carphone Warehouse have had a mobile optimised site with click-to-call functionality for over a year, and have recently launched one of the category’s first fully transactional sites. “A lot of our weekly traffic - up to 16% during our peak trading period - is coming from our mobile site,” Gareth observes. “And we expect this traffic to grow as consumers increasingly use their mobile device as a substitute for desktop browsing and discovering products on the go.” Being able to leverage the Best Buy insights for subsequent Carphone Warehouse campaigns was therefore a critical requirement.

“We didn’t evaluate the Best Buy campaign only from a longitudinal mobile perspective, i.e. the impact of mobile investment on mobile performance,” Gareth explains. They focused instead on studying mobile’s impact on Best Buy’s other digital marketing and brand activity, in particular the “ripple effect” that mobile creates in spreading awareness across multiple channels. “We have this hypothesis that a lot of what you do on mobile may not immediately affect the mobile sale, but that mobile is the glue that ties together multi-channel activity. So a pound invested in mobile shouldn’t be assessed only from a mobile ROI.” Starting from a baseline of low brand awareness of Best Buy in the UK, the team set out to test its hypothesis.

## Tried and tested

Together with their agencies Efficient Frontier (now part of the Adobe family) and MCHI (part of the WPP Group), Best Buy implemented an integrated Google advertising approach to supplement their existing search activity. A series of roadblocks (which are takeovers of all advertising formats on a page) ran on YouTube for mobile to raise awareness. “So that was about reach and impressions,” Gareth explains. “We also did some more premium activity, so we did pre-rolls on YouTube as well, and that was interesting because it was an opportunity to show the TV ads that we’d only been able to test on a very localised basis on TV.” Because the investment in producing the ads has already been made, running the ads on YouTube offered a way to make that investment go further. Finally, they also ran display ads across the AdMob network. Through these means, Gareth’s team hoped to gain mass reach and high frequency at relatively low cost while interacting with users through an on-the-go rich media experience.

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## About Carphone Warehouse

The Carphone Warehouse Group was founded in 1989 by Charles Dunstone as a UK mobile phone retailer. From 1998, the business supplemented this organic growth with a series of acquisitions both in the UK and Western Europe and now has a portfolio of over 2,400 stores across eight European countries.

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## Watch this space

The campaign saw a 45% increase in desktop CTR, a 30% increase in tablet CTR and a 29% lift in mobile CTR, demonstrating the multi-channel impact of mobile display with Google. Over the weekend of the YouTube takeovers, Best Buy brand terms saw an organic lift of about 25%. Meanwhile, mobile traffic grew week-on-week by 37% off the back of the YouTube takeover, and it's clear from YouTube insights that the pre-rolls were viewed on average all the way through without skipping out. The YouTube takeover on the Saturday during the campaign generated an incremental 20,000 visitors to the site.

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*"If your objective is to get as much bang for your buck as you possibly can in frequency, volume and scale, mobile is relatively straightforward to optimise."*

**- Gareth Jones, Head of Online Marketing, Carphone Warehouse**

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But even these promising numbers don't tell the whole story; Gareth believes that the real value in the exercise lies in the wisdom about user behaviour that they've gained. For example, YouTube insights revealed who watched each TV ad, where they watched it and whether they watched from start to finish. "So there was a lot of rich analytical insight that we could glean from people engaging with that video that arguably you don't get when people consume the TV ad on the TV," he says. "And if you look at the CPM and compare it to TV boxes, it was significantly cheaper, around 20% cheaper on a CPM basis." He also has an interesting view that engagement with the TV ads via consumers' smartphone devices offers a more involving and immersive experience than watching the ads via traditional TV boxes - a "lean-forward" experience rather than a passive one. And via YouTube insights they have the analytics to substantiate that view, including dropoff points, interest traces and typical viewing patterns. In all, they recorded 400,000 views of the 30-second spot.

The YouTube roadblocks ran on specific days, and this enabled Gareth to study the mobile's multi-channel influence. "We pretty much saw an immediate ripple effect," he reveals. "Post-roadblock we saw a 29% increase in the subsequent week in brand searches on desktop. As important, the click-through on those searches also grew."

Significant discoveries about user behaviour on tablets emerged too. "If somebody was buying a consumer electronics product by their iPad, they were typically having higher transaction values and more frequent purchases than non-iPad users. So we were beginning to see that there was a positive displacement from searching on the mobile and then typing in 'Best Buy' searches on the tablet."

Although Best Buy, as a brand, was ultimately pulled back from the UK, Carphone Warehouse believes the insights they've gained about mobile's contribution to multi-channel brand building will be immediately applicable to future ventures. In fact, when they launched one of the first fully transactional sites in the telco category earlier this year (in conjunction with the mobile specialist agency Usable), they applied the insights from Best Buy and rolled them straight into the mobile plan for Carphone Warehouse. Going forward, their aim is to replicate the successful Best Buy Mobile model outside of North America and Western Europe too. "There's a huge amount of buzz about mobile and mobile advertising," Gareth says, "but you can get lots of efficiency because at the moment it's relatively inexpensive. And the ripple effect should not be underestimated."

