Consistency pays off for Telus

BY MARIJA DJUKIC

With the optimistic tagline "The future is friendly" sharing space with meerkats against a clutter-free white backdrop. Telus' customer-focused advertising continues to win over Canadian consumers. In fact, the universal appeal of animals and simple language - currently focusing on smartphones - has allowed the Burnaby, B.C.-based telecommunications company to achieve a 54% growth in wireless data this year while staying true to its vision of making complex things simple. Today, Telus has approximately 5.8 million wireless subscribers and 4,000 retail stores and dealership locations across Canada.

Launched in 1999 by the merger of Alberta-based Telus Communications and BCTel,

GOOD BRANDS REFLECT POPULAR CULTURE, WHILE GREAT BRANDS CREATE POPULAR CULTURE Telus became Canada's second-largest telecom with 22% of market share. In 2000, it acquired Canadian cellphone provider Clearnet Communications —

the source of its animal themes. Since then, the name originating from "telecommunications" and "universality" has attempted to become "friendly" and "responsive."

Nancy Beattie, GM for Telus at AOR Taxi, has been working on Telus accounts for almost five years, and says that the challenges faced by the brand in the past include misconceptions that technology is scary, expensive, difficult to use or only for business people.

"Customers are overwhelmed with the rapid changes in the category, which is a major reason why we are consistent in our look – without complex and fancy words – and our open customer service," she says.

Industry watcher Alan C. Middleton, ED at Schulich Executive Education Centre, says that Telus has

achieved continuity with its image, while keeping it fresh with an irreverent approach and various spokescritters. "It grabs onto the consumer, making a connection and having the patience to stick to its core," he says.

Tammy Scott,
VP marketing
communications
at Telus, says that
for a brand to be
successful, "it must
break through the clutter with
appealing, friendly ads that are

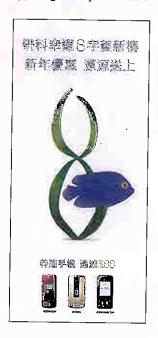
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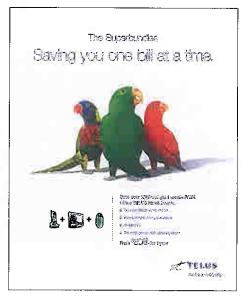
relevant – explaining how the product or service can enhance the life of the consumer. Telus has a universal appeal with a brand platform that transcends age, gender and

> geography." Earlier this year, Telus launched its array of smartphones - including models for HTC. Research in Motion. Motorola and Palm - with campaign slogans dreamed up by Taxi that include "Say-it-all" and "We believe in smartphones

for all." Telus was seen nationally in TV spots, cinema ads, print, online, in-store and OOH. The latter campaign introduced the newest critter – the meerkat – to emphasize Telus' social image.

To engage consumers with its smartphones in a new and entertaining way, Telus introduced the fictitious character Ron Ronn in 10 TV spots during Canadian Idol this past summer (see p. 31). Taxi created the 30-second clips featuring Ronn using his smartphone to demonstrate the benefits of the product - surfing the net, sending text messages and uploading pictures on Facebook - but also to show that anybody could own and operate one. "Telus humanizes the technology and makes it appear as an aid," says Middleton.





Telus's animal motif transcends age, gender, geography and cultures

And, to appeal to fed-up and overcharged consumers, Telus launched its discount brand Koodo Mobile in April. Its catchy term "Fat-free mobility," created by Taxi 2, allowed it to break through the myriad telcom ads. Koodo's '80s-themed workout ads were everywhere. in a campaign including TV. radio, online, POS and OOH. In August, yellow vinyl-wrapped kiosks in six Montreal Metro stations displayed an interactive game by iGotcha Media using touch-screen technology to promote Koodo as a nationwide talk and text brand. The concept, "Where's Koodo?" - also created by Taxi 2 - took advantage of the increased popularity of touch-screens.

This month, to show its support for breast cancer awareness, Telus rebranded its storefronts to focus on its Pink Pearl program, featuring its exclusive Pink Blackberry Pearl. Employees are wearing T-shirts promoting the program, which donates \$25 from each Pink Pearl sold to the Rethink Breast Cancer foundation.
Telus stores are also selling



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reusable bags branded with the circular "Fashion Targets Breast Cancer" logo and Gund pink chameleons, and donating 100% of the proceeds from their sale to the foundation.

"When an employee buys a Pink Pearl, Telus doubles the



donation to \$50," says Scott.
"Our approach is to start within, with branded ambassadors to promote our brand."

Other recent Telus accomplishments include the Telus Innovation Experience (TIE) by Montreal-based agency LVL Studio – an online city

that showcases IT business solutions and communications — and the temporary pop-up Café Telus at Mont Tremblant by Montreal-based experiential marketing agency JSEM, a brand activation strategy for the new smartphones.

And finally, to link Telus back to the environment, its media placement is future-friendly too. Past ad campaigns in Toronto's *Metro* had one edition reprinted on 100% recyclable paper, while enviro-friendly billboards were created in its power washing campaign.

"Telus uses nature as a metaphor to show people that communication technology can simplify their lives, while doing something both new and economical," says Scott. "Good brands reflect popular culture, while great brands create popular culture."

