

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 BC Tel, 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 spokespersons. "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

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.



GOOD BRANDS REFLECT POPULAR CULTURE, WHILE GREAT BRANDS CREATE POPULAR CULTURE



