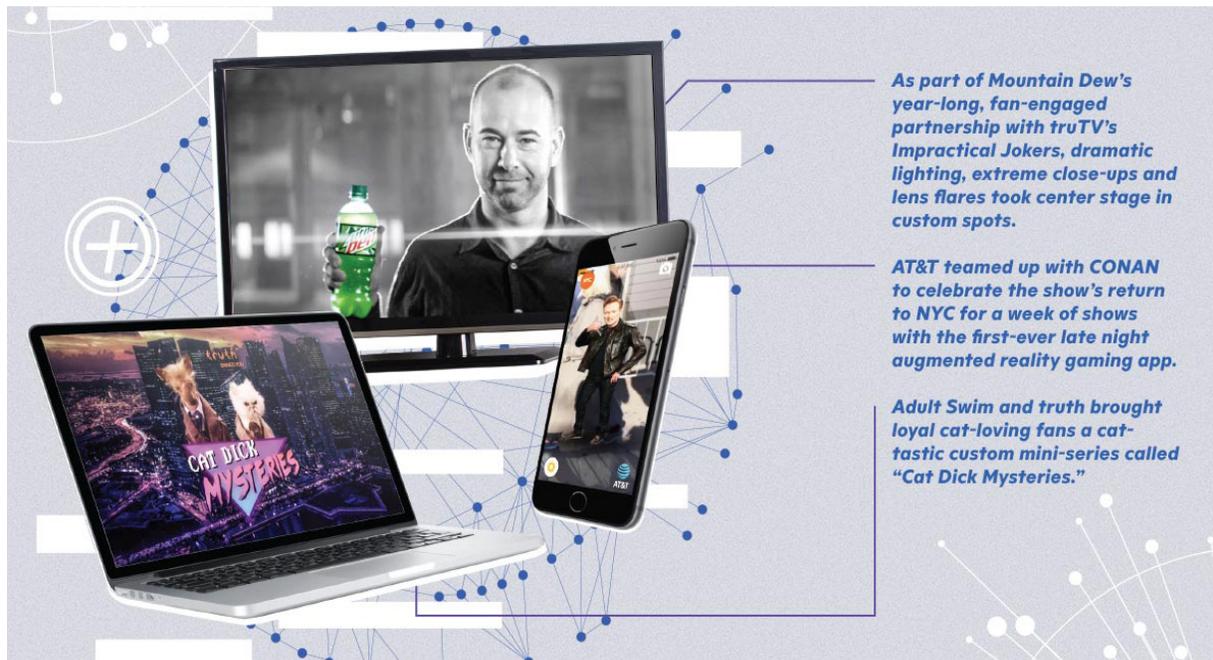


## BRANDED CONTENT CAN'T DEPEND ON CREATIVITY ALONE

In order to scale, you'll need to find the right marketing mix

By Dan Riess, Exec VP-Content Partnerships and Co-head, Turner Ignite.

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*As part of Mountain Dew's year-long, fan-engaged partnership with truTV's Impractical Jokers, dramatic lighting, extreme close-ups and lens flares took center stage in custom spots.*

*AT&T teamed up with CONAN to celebrate the show's return to NYC for a week of shows with the first-ever late night augmented reality gaming app.*

*Adult Swim and truth brought loyal cat-loving fans a cat-tastic custom mini-series called "Cat Dick Mysteries."*

More and more, marketers consider themselves brand storytellers. And at this point in the maturation of branded content, most of the energy seems to be focused on the creative—the sexy, award-winning side of the story.

But can creativity alone move branded content into a full-grown piece of every marketer's channel strategy?

Creativity, as evidenced by the amazing work on display right now in Cannes, will continue to significantly drive and elevate branded content. However, the real seismic shift that will move branded content from a creative experiment to a key part of an advertiser's strategy will come from better understanding its role in the broader marketing mix.

It's up to us to create the new media models and metrics to prove just how beneficial branded content is to driving brand relevance and business results.

### DEMAND FOR BRANDED CONTENT IS DRIVING STAGGERING GROWTH AND INVESTMENT

A survey by the Content Marketing Institute found that 73% of marketers say creating more engaging content is a top priority of their organization. In 2016, marketers spent more than \$10 billion on branded content, according to Forrester Research. The Boston Consulting Group expects spending on branded content to rise to \$25 billion by 2019. That is

a lot of investment, yet challenges still remain to ensure the right audiences see branded content and to scale the approach beyond one-off creative experiments.

*"The harsh reality is that branded content, even when it's great, isn't getting seen or discovered by audiences."*

—Forrester Senior Analyst Ryan Skinner

All that creative energy is wasted if a great piece of content goes unseen. Marketing analytics firm Beckon analyzed branded content data for clients such as Coca-Cola, IBM and Gap, representing over \$16 billion in marketing spend. It found that the average number of content pieces tripled over a 12-month period, but that just 5% of content generated 90% of total consumer engagements. Further, Beckon found that nonworking media was up 50%, while working media grew 7% on average. It's clear that opportunities exist to invest in the media that drives traffic to branded content.

A smart marketing mix understands how each element interacts and drives higher engagement. Branded content is often viewed as a singular approach, with measurement efforts focused on understanding its effectiveness compared with traditional advertising. We need to look closer at the impact of branded content on traditional

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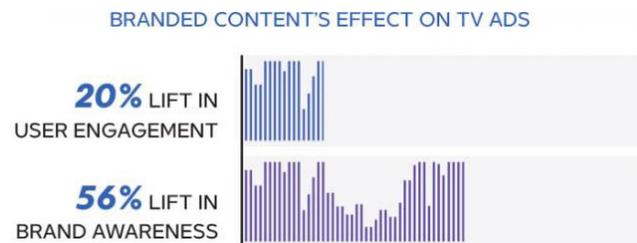
advertising to unlock its potential, as well as to plan for its future.

As marketers shift more of their focus to telling their own story in a bigger way, groups like Turner Ignite have been busy experimenting with new ad formats and capabilities across platforms to figure out what is working and why. One way we're doing this is by bringing the format to television, providing a high-reach, clutter-free environment for better brand storytelling. Over the past year, Turner has replaced 13 hours of traditional commercial time with 300 storytelling pods across nearly every one of our networks.



## THE HALO EFFECT

To understand the value of the format on television, we're focusing our research efforts on the relationship between the native storytelling pods and the traditional ads that surround them. Our early findings demonstrate a positive halo effect—branded content enhances the performance of traditional commercials that follow with a consistent lift in viewer engagement of 20%, and an average increase in brand awareness of 56%.



Recent studies from Polar and Ipsos Connect show a similar transfer effect between digital branded content and companion display ads. They found that pairing companion display ads with branded content improved purchase intent of the branded content by 17% and likeability by 9%, with no negative impact on brand perception.

There is no magic bullet, but these insights are encouraging. We believe branded content and traditional advertising are complementary, so we're continuing to focus on how they work together, not apart. By digging deeper into the halo effect, and extending our research to digital and social, we're working to further uncover how branded content engages with audiences across all platforms.

There is amazing creativity pouring into the branded content space. Above all else, we want to make sure these incredible brand stories reach their intended audiences. This can only happen by focusing equal effort, with our advertising partners, on how all this brand storytelling relates to their traditional media campaigns. And how this understanding makes your media spend work harder.

The breakthrough we need is in reach. Great content deserves equally strong planning and distribution.

## ABOUT <sup>TURNER</sup>ignite

Turner Ignite is focused on reimagining advertising. Powered by unrivaled branded content services, data-rich ad targeting capabilities, first-of-its kind social optimization tools and global distribution, Turner Ignite empowers brands to build more meaningful connections with consumers and drive return on investment at scale. The business unit is backed by Turner's wide-scale audience of diverse fans within its portfolio properties, including leading media brands Adult Swim, Boomerang, Cartoon Network, CNN, Great Big Story, HLN, SuperDeluxe, TBS, TNT, truTV, Bleacher Report and Turner Sports' high-profile coverage of the NBA, Major League Baseball, NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Championship, ELEGUE, UEFA and professional golf. In addition, the company has digital sales partnerships with the NBA, NCAA and PGA.