Crowdsourcing

Background

Crowdsourcing is the online request of certain creative tasks to crowds of experts and enthusiasts. Proving creative ideas can come from anyone, anywhere. By outsourcing creative responsibilities to the crowd there is a sense of "community support". The community comes together and interacts spawning positive energy, which could turn into positive PR and social mention. Crowdsourced opportunities for advertisers can range from logo, banner, and video creation, to packaging conceptualization. Competitive crowdsourcing offers freelance designers the opportunity to design against an advertiser's objective, and receive compensation for executing.

Crowdsourcing has been growing since mid-2006. Not only do small advertisers who are unable to afford professional work take advantage of the crowdsourcing model, but major brands such as MTV, Doritos and Google. One crowdsourcing partner, OpenAd.net, has more than 11,500 contributors from more than 125 countries (AdAge).

"Can a crowdsourced creative campaign replace the work of a high profile creative agency"? While crowdsourcing is useful for refining ideas, the chosen design should deliver against the idea stated in the creative brief, and objective. The outsourced creative concepts are singular in nature, which would make it difficult to support all efforts around one execution. However, a couple benefits for advertisers include inexpensive and abundant ideas. Despite the benefits of crowdsourcing, clients and designers need to weigh out the benefits and risks before engaging.

Details

<u>Client Benefits</u>: **Efficiency, Abundant Ideas, and Creative Selection**

The most recognizable benefit for an advertiser is a design produced at a fraction of what it would cost through traditional methods. Essentially you receive "More Bang for your buck", and fresh ideas. Multiple designer submissions can also lead to further ideation for agencies, sourcing creative solutions. The client also has the benefit of choosing the perfect creative execution which delivers against their brief.

<u>Designer Benefits</u>: **Reduced Barriers to Entry, Networking Opportunities, and Cash Incentive**

Whether a professional designer, or a design student; crowdsourcing provides a level playing field for all designers reducing barriers to entry. It is not every day a designer has the opportunity to be challenged or associated with a top brand.   Crowdsourcing is a great way for a designer to grow their portfolio and network with other designers. In addition designers are incentivized to participate for a cash prize, and potential national recognition.

<u>Client Risks</u>: **Partner Relationship, No Interaction with Creative, and Legal Risk**

Before engaging with a partner the advertiser needs to weigh the risks along with the benefits. Outsourcing creative duties completely to the crowd come at the expense of building a relationship with a long term partner who would nurture and grow the brand. When it comes to creative development there is little to no interaction with the individual designer, executing the design. Therefore you lose the opportunity to bounce ideas off each other. Essentially what you get is what you get. Finally, while legal safeguards are in place, there is always the potential of legal risk. What happens if the winning logo becomes the next iconic logo?

<u>Designer Risks</u>: **Time Investment and No Ownership**

It appears the designer has nothing to lose in the deal. However, designers invest their time and energy into executing creative which could potentially never be used. The designer is working for free with no guarantee of compensation unless their design wins.   The designer as well loses ownership rights to their creation after submission.

Partners

Two prominent crowdsourced partners are Zooppa and CrowdSpring.

Zooppa (http://zooppa.com) –A social network of developers who execute creative for brands based on the brand brief or client objective. Clients can choose the winner or the community can select their favorite design. The process starts with a brand posting a project for the community. The community members submit their design, and other community members vote for their favorite. Zooppa also prescreens all submissions to ensure they are appropriate. The favorite execution is the winner, and receives cash incentives. Executions include producing a viral video, designing an animated sequence, creating a print ad and writing scripts or concepts for potential ads. Advertisers who have used Zooppa include Nike, Google, Mini and Sony. Below are a couple print examples.

CrowdSpring (http://www.crowdspring.com) – A one stop crowdsource design shop. CrowdSpring boasts over 84,000 designers executing graphic, web and industrial design, as well as, writing projects. At the beginning of the project the client sets the winning design price and is able to communicate with designers throughout the process. CrowdSpring also boasts a thorough legal agreement protecting the legal rights of the client and designer. Advertisers who have used CrowdSpring include Barilla, Starbucks, TiVo and LG.

Summary

Whether looking for copy, logo, video or Twitter background design there are groups of experts out there who are willing to execute your vision for a fraction of the cost of a top agency would charge. Prior to engaging with a crowdsourcing solution, it is important to weigh the pros and cons. Ensure there is a clear vision and direction before tasking the community since there is little to no engagement with the designer. Also, confirm all legal safeguards are covered. This not only protects the designer's rights, but the advertiser as well. Remember, when moving forward with crowdsourced campaign there are partners who can help manage the process.

Kim Bohling

Mindshare Chicago