

Big brands don't mind live Periscope stumbles to reach millennials

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NEW YORK (Reuters) - When **Benefit Cosmetics**, a San Francisco-based maker of skin care and makeup, used **Twitter**'s Periscope live-streaming video service to make a product demonstration, a heckler became part of the live show, typing to the presenter, "I can see down your top" even though there was no wardrobe malfunction.

During **BMW** of North America's debut of its M2 coupe on Periscope last month, the sound dipped in and out as the driver talked about how the car handled.

And one of **Royal Caribbean** International's first video streams was disrupted by a viewer posting the alphabet one letter at a time, in an attempt to clog the comment feed. Still, the company was happy with the 30,000 viewers the campaign attracted, said **Kara Wallace**, vice president, North American **marketing** at **Royal Caribbean**.

While glitches like those would be unthinkable in a produced, controlled **advertising** environment, big **brands** such as **Royal Caribbean**, **BMW** and **Benefit** are going ahead with plans to use live-streaming video to attract some of the most finicky consumers, young millennials who ignore many traditional and online ads.

"There is an authenticity to this kind of campaign," Wallace said. "This is going to be the future of **marketing**."

Periscope, which **Twitter** bought earlier this year, allows anyone to live-stream an event through their mobile phones, while viewers can participate by sending cartoon hearts across the video feed and typing comments which scroll across the screen for all to see. Some viewers love the chance to interact, with results that can surprise the advertisers.

It is still early days for Periscope, which currently does not charge advertisers, and had 10 million accounts as of August, compared to more than 300 million at **Twitter**.

Some **brands** are not entirely sold on Periscope as a **marketing** tool. Snack and beverage company Mondelez International Inc has experimented with it a bit, but has not decided if it wants to make it a staple part of its **marketing**, said **Cindy Chen**, global head of e-commerce.

"Periscope isn't really set up right now to accommodate **brands**," said **Dustin Callif, managing director, digital** at Tool North America, which produced the **Royal Caribbean** streams. "It's an experiment which is fun for a **brand**, but it is also risky."

WORKING ON THE FLY

While **brands** are well-versed in handling outside comments that come with all **social** media, live streaming video is extra tricky as everything is real-time, executives said.

Even **Twitter** was caught off guard on a Periscope stream of an earnings call when a watcher asked **CEO Jack Dorsey** if he was single, sending a flood of cartoon hearts across the screen.

"The biggest sort of potential headache of Periscope is that it is a live event and you can't script anything," said **Pete Harmata, digital innovations** manager at **BMW** of North America. "You have to adjust on the fly, which can be pretty strenuous."

BMW pulled a 24-hour teaser of its M2 coupe, showing just the front of the car, after a few minutes, when impatient viewers demanded to see the car immediately.

BMW had 5,000 viewers of the debut, a drop in the bucket compared to television, but it was a lot cheaper and it reached its biggest fans, said **Dan Kelleher**, co-chief creative officer at kirshenbaum bond senecal + partners, or kbs, which created the campaign.

Benefit, owned by luxury-goods conglomerate LVMH, has at least one person ready to block inappropriate comments during each stream, said **Claudia Allwood, director** of U.S. **digital marketing**, which has seen 2,000 viewers per stream.

Similarly, thousands viewed **Royal Caribbean's** Periscope streams, which showed scenes of everything from customers riding a zip line on the island of St. Kitts to chefs preparing meals on its ships. The Miami-based cruise operator streamed the clips live on Periscope, and ran them on 80 **digital** billboards across New York City after a slight delay.

To prepare for any potential problems, the cruise operator had ads ready to run on the billboards if the Periscope stream went down or something unsavory happened.

While it did not need to run the replacement ads, some issues arose. A video from a natural water slide in Puerto Rico had so many viewers that after a few minutes commenting was shut down, said **John Kears**, **creative director** at Boston-based Mullen Lowe Group, which worked on the campaign.

Thanks to the delay between the live stream and **digital** billboards, the company had time to strip out the alphabet comments that delayed its stream. They prepared for worse.

"We had to know what the F-bomb was in Russian," **Kears** said.

(Reporting By Jessica Toonkel; Additional reporting by Anjali Athavaley in New York and

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